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SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE

OF

GEORGE WILSON,

THE

Blackheath Pedestrian;

WHO UNDERTOOK TO

WALK ONE THOUSAND MILES

IN TWENTY DAYS!!

BUT WAS INTERRUPTED BY A WARRANT FROM CERTAIN MAGISTRATES OF THE DISTRICT, ON THE MORNING OF THE SIXTEENTH DAY, AFTER HAVING COMPLETED 750 MILES.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Vires Acquirit Eundo.

LONDON:

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1815.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

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The following errors have crept in, through the hurry of a First Edition, which shall be corrected in the Second:

ERRATA.

Page 4, line 2, omit "*unanimously.*"
Page 11, line 25, for "*Sisters,*" read "*Brothers.*"
Page 18, line 10, for "*50l.*" read "*200l.*"
Page 23, line 15, for "*same Evening,*" read "*third Evening.*"
Page 26, line 21, omit from "*over*" to "*mountain,*" line 26.
Page 28, line 11, for "*over,*" read "*to.*"
Page 46, omit "*George Aukland and Wm. Brown.*"

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DEDICATION.

To the Reverend and Right Worshipful, the Bench of Magistrates for the County of Kent, superintending the Districts of Blackheath and Greenwich.

GENTLEMEN,

UNSKILLED as I am in the language of Dedications, yet, ambitious to present an humble tribute of my profound veneration and respect to those Gentlemen, by the decrees of whose united wisdom and authority, I am propelled to the business of an Author, I feel it my duty to lay at your Reverend and Worshipful feet the first fruits of my humble talents in that way; and to intreat your acceptance of the offering, as a small but sincere token of my respect. From the pen of an untutored man, little can be expected, in point of language, worthy the notice of high-placed patrons. I am but too sensible of my own deficiency in the polished terms of composition and eloquence, to aim at any flights of panegyric worthy to tickle the ears of grave and learned gentlemen, in the exalted situations you so wisely and so worthily fill. To eloquence I have no pretensions. WALKING, and not *talking*,

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is my humble trade; and had my profession been *fighting*, I should never have been driven to the necessity of *writing*, as an alternative to avert the severities of disappointment, resulting from the exertions of your all-powerful authority, by which I was prevented from completing the task I lately undertook, of walking one *thousand miles* in *twenty days*, which, had I been permitted to complete, would have brought me the means of directing my poor, but arduous exertions, to a more lucrative and much less laborious calling, at my advanced years, and have enabled me to pay my debts, and to fulfil the duties of a father to *four* of my children, by rescuing them from the dangers of ill example and vice, and rearing them to honesty and virtue. My ill stars, however, have denied me the happier qualification of a *pugilist*, which would have secured to me the favour and protection of the great and the fashionable, and perhaps to the mild forbearance even of justicial rigour; I might then have attracted the notice of the *Men of the Fancy*, as they are called, and have laid my claims to an occasional *sprig* of those palms and laurels, that have so frequently adorned the brows of the *Cribbs* and the *Molineuxs*, the *Richmonds* and the *Gullies*, the *Dutch Sams* and *Game Chickens*, and all the other men of *milling* celebrity, who have successively shared the friendship and favours of all ranks, from Princes, Peers, and Parliament-men, down to the *coster-mongers* of *Tothillfields*, to their brother *amateurs* in St. Giles's and Whitechapel; and whose hardy feats have been as proudly recorded in the historic columns of the daily prints, as those of a WELLINGTON, and all his brother heroes, who have reaped such har-

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vests of glory on the Continent, and filled the world with their fame.

I might, then, Gentlemen, have entered the lists at *Wormwood Scrubbs*, and all the other fields of pugilistic contest; and possibly have challenged the proud honours of *Champion of England*. Magisterial wisdom might then have blinked at my error: the pacific *Quorum* might have looked another way; and perhaps some junior members of a certain grave profession, mindful of more juvenile diversions, and the classic pastimes of academic leisure, might have laid aside their pontificials for a day, and taken a sly peep, under the *rose*, at the proofs of my prowess.

But, alas, gentlemen, the fates who governed my birth, gave a different cast to my destiny, and denied me the more fortunate faculties of the *fist*. A rustic education, such as it was, joined to the vicissitudes of perverse fortune, led me to cultivate my talents at the wrong end; and instead of directing the cunning of my *head* to the lucrative profession of a *gambler*, or the vigour of my hands to the skill of a *bruizer*, I have unfortunately directed my chief attention to the agility of my *legs*, which are not *black* ones, as a very unproductive source of livelihood; but they have sometimes, though indirectly, extricated me from imprisonment and famine.

It never reached my apprehension, however, until chastised by your all-powerful authority, that *walking alone* on the skirt of a wild heath, remote from the ordinary intercourse of the busy throng, was a *violation of public morals*, or a *breach of the peace*. It remained for your united wisdom to enlighten my darkness on this

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head, and convince me by the significant instrumentality of a warrant, unanimously issued for my apprehension, that I was, though most unknowingly and unintentionally transgressing the law, in presuming to walk on Backheath, even WITH *your leave* and *promise* of *protection*; for I beg leave to remind you that I had both before I ventured to commence the task. My errror was further confirmed by the circumstance of my being permitted to continue my laborious exertions for fifteen days, without so much as an authentic intimation, that I was doing any thing contrary to law or injurious to the public peace. It was no trial of skill with any rival; I did not publicly announce, except to a few persons in the neighbourhood, the object of my peregrination. I did not influence the public prints to notice me or my efforts. I did not send for the multitude who were pleased to honour me with their attention; and least of all, did I dream that an obscure, forlorn, and insignificant being, like me, could have formed a centre of attraction for the thousands who daily crowded Blackheath, while I was labouring to perform a task, that in its result was to save me from famine, and bring me a few pounds, by what I conceived the most laborious and most harrassing occupation on earth, for twenty successive days. I had heard of the perambulations of the celebrated CAPTAIN BARCLAY, who had won a *thousand guineas* by walking a *thousand miles* in a *thousand hours*. I had the honour of knowing that gentleman, and feel a warm attachment to him as a brother disciple of what I am told has been jocularly termed the *peripatetic school*. He met no interruption from the Magistrates of the county

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where he performed his feats. Perhaps I was too presumtuous, in expecting that I might be allowed to perform a similar task in less than *half the time*. But it was my misfortune to act in a different county from Captain Barclay, and where probably nicer principles of morality and stricter notions of decorum prevail with the custodians of the Peace: for it is quite impossible that I should suppose that Captain Barclay or any other sporting gentleman, who had ventured to walk where I did, would not have been interrupted and apprehended with the same impartiality that I was.

However, gentlemen, bowing with the profoundest deference to the wisdom of your decree, for rescinding the *permission* and *promise* of *protection* you were pleased to concede to my humble application, in the first instance; and presuming there may have been some weighty reasons, probably of state, for the steps you have adopted towards an obscure *unit* like myself, I must presume they were as *correct* as they were *wise, just,* and *impartial;* and hope that all deluded mortals like myself, who are hard pushed by the influence of her *Imperious Mightiness,* Necessity, the prolific mother of inventions, to whatever other species of prize feats they may be urged for recruiting their finances, whether prize *fighting,* prize *eating,* prize *grinning,* or prize *racing,* they may eschew the perils of *prize walking* in the good county of Kent, at least in that quarter so particularly fortunate in the auspious superintendance of your worships.

Permit me, at the same time, to return my humble thanks to your worships for the lesson

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of experience and morality your worships have afforded me on the heretofore unsuspected *vice* of *walking*, either for the decision of wagers or the procuration of bread; and the example you have shewn, that on an extensive field of action, covered with the booths of itenerant shewmen, tumblers, conjurers, rope-dancers, and gin-sellers, for the attraction of the idle and the dissolute, and this for fifteen successive days, there was not an *individual* to be found, whom you could view as a possible cause of mischief, or in anywise dangerous to the peace and good order of your county, but a miserable old man of fifty-one displaying, by many a weary mile's walk, that the vigour of youthful agility had not deserted him even at the sun set of life; that he was still able to perform the unparalleled feat of *walking* a *thousand miles* in *twenty days*, and to prove on British Ground, that as Britain had excelled every country on the globe, in every point of competition, so in the humble art of ambulation she had a veteran, who could manifest her superiority, and who could still surpass the famed exertions of a *Powell*, a *Steward*, or a *Barclay*—men whose celebrity have heretofore challenged so much applause.

Gentlemen, I presume not to develope the reasons that have rendered the exertion of your power, towards myself exclusively, a measure of grave wisdom; nor to question the justice and impartiality of issuing your warrant against me individually, while so many others, *Shewmen*, *Tumblers*, *Conjurers*, and *Gin Sellers*, at least equally, as I conceive, attractive of crowds as myself, were allowed to depart in peace and unmo-

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lested, with the gainful produce of their trade in their pockets—such things as these are above my vulgar comprehension.

Give me leave to assure your Worships, that the profession of *walking*, which has rendered me so obnoxious in your grave views, is not altogether a matter of *choice*; but, as was once said of the *blindness* of his *mare*, by a Hibernian fellow-subject, "it is not my *fault*, but my *misfortune*." I had much rather *ride*. Far be it from me to impute any thing to your Worships decree against me, but the most strict impartiality and conscientious views of justice: it is my duty, therefore, in this place, to disclaim all belief to rumours and insinuations of a contrary complexion. For there have been those in your neighbourhood who have had the contumacy to suggest, that had there been any thing of a likelihood that I should fail in my attempt, I should have experienced no interruption to the last moment of the time allotted me.

However, Gentlemen, be the result to my fortunes what they may, the exertions of your resistless authority have given a new turn to my adventures, and forced me to become an Author in the shape of my own Biographer. Wretched historian!---miserable topic! Many, however, of the generous patrons, to whose notice this affair has casually introduced me, and to whom I have told my story, were pleased to think it worth committing to paper, as giving to the curious public some account of an unfortunate man, for whom they have kindly taken an interest, and whom they consider as rather unfairly persecuted. I adopt the friendly suggestion, in the humble hope that this effort may produce, under their

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protection, some alternative from the cutting disappointment I have experienced, through the prevention to compleat the task I had undertaken.

Many of your Worships, and more especially the reverend members of your bench, will know the moral maxim, that "*out of evil often cometh good.*" And that, therefore, the prohibition of your Worships, no doubt for the best and gravest of purposes, may, though undesignedly, produce to me even more of advantage than your continued permission and promised protection could have effected.

I shall, in such case, consider myself, however, indirectly indebted to you, for every advantage. I am not without hopes, even yet, of finding you reluctant for what is past, *making me liberal amends*, amongst the number of my subscribers; and I beg leave to subscribe myself, with the profoundest veneration,

Your most humble and devoted Servant,

GEORGE WILSON.

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SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE OF GEORGE WILSON,

THE

Blackheath Pedestrian.

IN compliance with the desire of the Ladies and Gentlemen of Blackheath and its neighbourhood, who have taken so humane and generous an interest in my behalf, under the embarrassing circumstances that have recently involved me, I undertake the reluctant task of sketching the circumstances of my Life and Fortunes. They have been chequered, certainly, with vicissitudes that, long since, would have reconciled me to the fate which must, sooner or later, be the common lot of humanity. Had the incidents I detail fallen to the lot of a man in the higher rank of life, they might probably be deemed interesting; but, destitute as the writer is of any personal consideration that could heighten curiosity for the particulars of his story, —a story which he obtrudes on the public with unfeigned regret, it must now rest on its own merits, with little other claim to public notice than the liberal recommendation of those generous protectors, at

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whose suggestion it was written. They have been pleased to urge me to the task, as one which may afford some alternative for my relief from the consequences of my interruption in the late pedestrian feat I had undertaken on Blackheath, and which I certainly should have completed long within the time I proposed, had it not been for the sudden and most unexpected prohibition, decreed against my further progress by certain of the Worshipful Magistrates of the district, assembling alternately at the *Green Man* on the *Heath*, and the *Mitre* in *Greenwich Town*, and for which prohibition no act of *mine*, as *I* humbly conceived, gave any just or lawful occasion. I was unconscious of any violation to the laws of GOD or *man*. I concerted nothing with the popular crowds who were pleased to consider *me* and *my task* as among the objects of curiosity and amusement worth the trouble of their attention. If curiosity be the prevalent principle of the British mind, and be sometimes highly excitable by causes not *very important* in the view of *sages* or *philosophers*, it was not *I* who implanted that principle. I did not send for the numerous attractions of popular *gazement* that crowded Blackheath, from some days after my commencement to the moment in which the *manifesto* or *rescript* of the Worshipful Bench was issued, not only to stop my further progress, but to take me into custody, and bring me before their dread tribunal to answer for my misdoings. I had no sort of connexion with the *Tumblers*, *Rope-Dancers*, *Fire-Eaters*, *Conjurors*, *Poney-Racers*, *Sutlers*, *Gin-Sellers*, *Gingerbread-Merchants*, *Ballad-Singers*, or other purveyors of amusement or luxury, who crowded Blackheath for a whole fortnight without

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interruption, whose avowed trade it is to attract popular curiosity, and who whenever, and wherever, *they* take the field, are sure to collect by hundreds and thousands the good-natured progeny of *Mr. John Bull*; and who, on this occasion, at least, seem not to have been considered as giving *any* offence by their powerful influence in convening and amusing the daily multitudes who appeared there. I had no means of attraction for crowds. The most perfect solitude would have much better answered my purposes and freed me from the pressure, embarrassment, and interruption, which continually annoyed me, and more than doubled the difficulties of my undertaking. But A FEW, to my knowledge, were any way interested in the result; and, if persons wholly indifferent to me were pleased to lay wagers with each other on the issue, it was no more than they would have done upon any other subject—a *poney-race*, a *dog-fight*, a *bruising-match*, or any of the innumerable occasions that continually occur to excite amongst the *sporting* world the spirit of *betting*. But with *this difference*, in *my* case; that I was in no *secret* with the *knowing ones*, had no concern in the *mysteries* of the *turf*, or the *boxing schools*; no privity or connection with any of the LEGS, *black* or *white*, but *my own*; nor any solid ground of expectation, beyond mere *hope*, of deriving any remuneration for my labours, above what a *two-penny postman*, if he were competent to my task, would have thought a miserable payment for his trouble. Had I been the *Bottle Conjuror*, the *Cock-Lane Ghost*, the *Invisible Girl*, the *Learned Pig*, the *Prize Ox*, *General Jackoo*, or any other of those *public characters*, who, in their turns, have attracted *multitudes*, and extracted *thousands*

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from their pockets in the metropolis; and had I ventured to try my fortune in any of those wonderful capacities on Blackheath, probably I should not have been considered so obnoxious to *grave authorities*, or so dangerous to the public peace. But it seems now to be settled, upon *learned* and *orthodox authority*, that a *poor old man*, walking a given number of rounds of the *same mile*, upon the *obscure corner* of a *public common*, either for his amusement, or to acquire a few pounds for his subsistence, the payment of his trifling debts, and the relief of his children, with no other *apparatus* than his *limbs* and the *scanty clothes* on *his back*, may, yet, be a much more formidable and dangerous animal, in the eyes of Justiciary wisdom than ordinary men think; and, though he may not have done anything in himself to excite riot or tumult, and though no such *disorder*, or any *symptom* thereof, had occurred, still, by *some remote possibility*, it *might* occur; and, therefore, as in the language of *Doctor Solomon*, "*Prevention* is better than *Cure*." It *might*, also, be perfectly wise and just to take such a person into custody, as the grand *nucleus* of popular attraction, the great *first cause* of tumult *in embryo*, and thereby secure, in the *very egg*, abortion to the coming mischief, which, though imperceptible to *ordinary* views, is *palpable* to the *second sight* of the *sapient seer*, who, like the *hogs* of the *highlanders*, can *ken mischief in the wind*. *All other persons* might be suffered to depart in peace, (however they may have contributed to popular congregation, their pockets well lined by their gains), as mere *harmless* accessaries; but, "*one* man may safely steal a horse, while *another* is hanged for peeping over the hedge."

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Experience ought to have taught me that it is not for a poor man to wrestle with official power. Undefined *Discretion*, whether *sound* or *rotten*, is an *immense* field of authority. *Maxims of state*, for aught I know, may have imperiously called for the measures adopted towards me. "*Might* is *right*," I have often both *heard* and *felt*; and I should have humbly kissed the rod, and retired to my original obscurity, from the PROUD STATE OF POPULAR CELEBRITY, which, it seems, I was in *danger* of attaining, had it not been for the kind and solicitous suggestions of those generous protectors, who, impressed as it would seem, with an opinion that I was an object of unmerited severity and something very like gratuitous oppression, have not only extended to me their liberal contributions for my present relief, but urged me to this effort of publishing my history, as a means of exciting in my behalf the liberality of that people whose GLORIOUS CHARACTER it is to DETEST OPPRESSION and VINDICATE the OPPRESSED.

Having thus cleared the ground by explaining the motives which have urged me to the awkward and most reluctant office of *my own Biographer*, I shall now proceed to a detail, which I feel can have little, if any thing, to excite interest; and which must owe its success to the generous protection and countenance of the NOBLE, the AMIABLE, and MOST KIND supporters who have recommended the effort; and whose goodness shall ever be indelibly graven in the heart and memory of the humble individual who has now the honour of submitting to them and the generous public the simple occurrences of his unfortunate life.

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To hereditary honours or high parentage I have no pretensions. I can look to no higher rank than of being an ENGLISHMAN, and no merits superior to those of an HONEST MAN; and upon these credentials I am satisfied to rest my claims of estimation with THE WORLD and MY COUNTRY. I am a native of NEWCASTLE *upon* TYNE, where my family, for more than a hundred years, have maintained a reputable character. My father, ROBERT WILSON, was an eminent ship builder there, as will be remembered by several who may probably read this Sketch. He married my mother, Mary Finlay, of a stock equally reputable with his own, and he carried on his business for a long series of time with industry and character; but no man, however laudable his pursuits or his conduct in trade, is proof against misfortunes. From a variety of untoward causes, his business at length became embarrassed, and he was reduced to insolvency, and the consequent wreck of his affairs. The honesty of his character, however, procured for him the appointment of a tide-waiter at the Custom-house of Newcastle, with the scanty emoluments of which he struggled some years to support a numerous family, and he at last died of a broken heart, leaving five children, myself and four sisters, dependent on my mother, who was then pregnant of a sixth, now my only brother. Added to her other embarrassments was a debt of my father's for 200*l.* due for money lent him, from time to time, by a most worthy and benevolent gentleman of Newcastle, Mr. WM. SCOTT, the father of our present venerable LORD CHANCELLOR, and to meet which my mother had no assets but the remnants of her furniture and the scattered

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and hopeless debts due to my father at his decease. But, the worthy Mr. Scott, so far from oppressing her by any claims, or declining all notice of her as a pauper unworthy of consideration, and of whom payment was never to be expected, he continued to her and her children the kindness and friendship he had so long shewn my father; and he and his good lady and most worthy family manifested the most kind and benevolent interest for our protection. For years were we daily fed and clothed by their bounty, and might have sunk under want but for their goodness. By the direction of Mr. Scott, Mr. Bartholomew Anderson, the brother in law of my mother, was appointed treasurer, to receive from her such savings of her profits as she could spare from time to time, until they amounted to 600*l.* which was placed at interest with the Corporation; and Mr. Anderson, as her trustee, received the interest for her benefit. From this and her *pawn-broking* business, commenced upon a small capital lent her by two of my brothers, she supported her family, having already paid to Mr. Scott the 200*l.* due by my father, with interest, and the different sums he had lent her himself.

She was not equally fortunate in the kindness of her own relatives. There was a Mr. *John Bell*, who had married her younger sister, and he used his most strenuous endeavours to get this 600*l.* from the Corporation into his hands, but failed in the purpose. A considerable property in houses had been left by will by my maternal grandfather to her younger daughter, the wife of John Bell, on the condition of paying 200*l.* to my mother. But though the legatee

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and her husband got possession of the property, the payment of the 200*l.* was resisted at law, and the defendant would have succeeded, but for the kind and liberal interference of the present Lord Chancellor, then a barrister, and going the Northern circuit. After a good deal of legal contest, it was finally agreed between Mr. George Browne, the attorney for the defendant, and Mr. Clayton, the attorney for our family, to submit the matters in dispute to Counsellor Scott, who was then in town. He kindly undertook the enquiry, and remained in Newcastle, while the judges and other barristers proceeded to Carlisle, and finally adjusted the business by awarding to my mother the 200*l.* with four years interest due on it; but Mr. Scott generously refused to take *any* fee for the professional trouble he had received; thus evincing that he still partook in the kind dispositions of all his family towards us. As we advanced in years, I was placed at the Chapel Free School, where I continued a pupil for four years, and at the age of thirteen, I was apprenticed, through the influence of the same worthy uncle, Mr. John Bell, but much against my own inclinations, to a shoe-maker, a freeman of the Corporation, who, however, treated me with great unkindness and cruelty; but I served him with fidelity for seven years, and at the age of 21, obtained my freedom of the Corporation. My mother, who knew my aversion to the business, and finding me smart and intelligent, took me as a clerk in her own business of pawn-broking, at an allowance of *twenty pounds* a year, with board and lodging. I remained with her seven years; at the end of which time, by thrift and economy, and paying

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for my own clothing, I found myself master of a little capital of 110*l*.

There was then a young woman, the niece of my good uncle, *John Bell*, who had acted some time as a servant to my mother, and to this young woman I looked with an eye of affection, which she did not discourage. She was comely in her person, and, as I thought, correct and industrious in her conduct, and I promised myself as much happiness as possible from a match with such a wife. My uncle, who discovered the growing attachment between me and his niece, not only approved and encouraged, but urged the matter, and promised to lend me 200*l*. at 4 per cent. in aid of my little capital, to set up business on my own account. The match took place accordingly, but he proved himself unfaithful to his promises. Would to Heaven I had not since many and *stronger* reasons to lament his conduct in respect to my conjugal peace!—In short, he never could be prevailed on to lend me more than a few small sums at different times, amounting to 30*l*. and after this sum had been laid out and dispersed in the way of my business, so that I could not recall it before a considerable lapse of time, he suddenly demanded and insisted on repayment, and threatened to arrest me if I failed.

I was therefore obliged to suspend my business, and hoard every shilling that came in, until I had made up the sum, to save me from arrest and ruin. In consequence of this act of severity, I could continue that business, exclusively, but two years. I was then induced to try my hand at some other, and I commenced that of a broker and dealer in second-hand articles, which I continued for the remainder of nine

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years, combined with so much of my former trade as I could find means to follow. I then relinquished pawn-broking, and commenced dealing in linen-drapery and hosiery, in which I continued some time with better success. I mention these trifles merely to shew, that the want of industry never formed any part of my character. As my wife was enabled now, with the assistance of her elder children, to attend to my shop, I sought anxiously for some collateral employment which might increase my little income. The repute of my industry recommended me to the notice of the Commissioners of Taxes in that quarter, and I was employed under them as collector of the assessed taxes, which, combined with another trust from my parish in collecting the poors' rates, and both continued for seven years, added about 30*l.* a-year to my income. These, I hope, are some vouchers for the confidence and good opinion of my employers.

The office of a tax-gatherer is not one of the most popular; and although by all the gentlemen and respectable inhabitants in the extensive range of district where the duties of my collection called me, I was treated with great kindness and hospitality, yet, to the great majority of those, with whom a little *importunacy* was sometimes requisite, I believe that in many instances a *tyger* would have appeared a much less formidable animal than a *tax-gatherer*. I obtained with the *mobility*, the *nic-name* of *Dog-tax*, and was occasionally complimented with their *hoots* and *hisses*. In many of my perigrinations I walked sometimes *fifty* or *sixty* miles a day; but the recollection of a reward that would add to the comforts of my family, lightened the labours and sweetened the bitterness of

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my duties. On the termination of seven years, being desirous to relinquish my employment, I applied to the commissioners for a certificate of my good conduct, which they were pleased to grant me with the greatest readiness, accompanied by the warmest expressions of their approbation; and this certificate now remains in possession of my wife at Newcastle, who, for reasons best known to herself, withholds it from me.

In the course of my business as a Broker, Hosier, and Draper, it became necessary for me frequently to visit London, generally about *six times* a year, the scantiness of my capital not allowing me to purchase largely at any one time; but, as *walking* was always my favourite amusement, and journies which afforded me but pleasure and pastime, appeared to my acquaintance as fraught with intolerable fatigue, my visits on business to the capital were always performed *on foot*. The distance from Newcastle to London by the direct road, is 276 miles, and the return made it 552, and this I uniformly completed, doing all my business, within twelve days. Sometimes, to vary the prospects of the journey, I went round through a different route, by York; and one time in particular I took the road by *Stilton*, *Peterborough*, *Lincoln*, *Barton*, over the Humber, to *Hull*, *Scarborough*, *Whitby*, *Stockton*, *Benton*, *Sedgefield*, *Durham*, and to *Newcastle*, a circuit of above 400 miles, which I completed in seven days.

Finding my wife, with the aid of her elder children and servants, competent to manage my business at home, I now thought of turning my amusement of walking to some profitable account. In my visits occasionally to London, I had some dealings with a re-

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spectable Map Seller in the Strand, Mr. CAREY, whose Maps and Geographical books I had sold for some years, and I have to acknowledge on all occasions his kindness and encouragement. I came to town in 1805, and in some conversation with that Gentleman on the subject of my long pedestrian journies, he suggested that if I was disposed to transfer my journies to a different quarter of the country, and aid him in the correction and enlargement of that celebrated publication, HIS ITINERARY through Great Britain, by more accurately ascertaining the distances between different places, noting the new roads, cross cuts, remarkable curiosities, and country seats of noblemen and gentlemen in my route, he would give me employment, and afford me the opportunity of selling, for my own profit, in the course of my journies, such of his Maps, Charts, and other Geographical publications as I chose, parcels of which should be forwarded to meet me in the different great towns which lay in my route. I agreed to accept his offer, and the South of England was pointed out as my field of action. He proposed to give me for my assistance a Mechanical Wheel, called an *Ambulator*, to aid me in more accurately ascertaining my measurements of the roads I was to travel. But, as I knew from experience, in the measured regularity of my own progress, and my habitual attention, that I could without such means ascertain his object with accuracy, I declined the trouble and embarrassment of pushing this wheel through a journey so extensive. I therefore only took with me a large Map of the country through which I was to move, a part of the *Itinerary*, divided into separate portions, interleaved, and a small

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pocket Journal, and I set out on my tour, always keeping my usual and regular pace, except where business or observation occasionally detained me. I checked my own observations on distance by the milestones I met, and traversed every cross road in my way. I made such necessary amendments and additions as my most accurate attentions could suggest, and I had the good fortune to complete this laborious task, not only to the satisfaction of my worthy employer, but in little more than *half* the time he expected. Having finished the business, I returned to Newcastle.

Nothing is more true than that the human faculties are strengthened by exertion, provided it be not carried beyond the tone of their natural strength. This effect I fully ascertained in my powers of walking; for though it might appear to many that the machinery of the human frame could not stand the work of the long and frequent journies I performed on foot, I found as my exertions advanced that my fatigue decreased, and my strength and agility were rather improved than exhausted; and thus has my experience verified the truth of the *motto* I have chosen,

"Vires acquirit Eundo."

If I were disposed to credit the doctrines of *Astrology*, I should be inclined to imagine that some *walking star* had influenced my nativity, or to suppose the planet Mercury, the *wing-footed* messenger of *Olympus*, had a principal sway in my destinies. Most men have an ambition to be thought excellent in some pursuit, however erroneous their notions of pre-eminence: *walking* was, therefore, the object of my emulation; and I own I anticipated, that at some time or other, this faculty would be the means

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of raising my humble fortune, and that if once I could compass such a feat as that in which I was lately engaged, it would open my road to celebrity and emolument. It was this *spark*, perhaps a mere *ignis fatus*, that cheared me by day and lighted me by night in many a tedious journey, gave new spring to my sinews, and encouraged, perhaps, my *vanity*, to perseverance.

On my return to Newcastle, after my *Itenerary* trip for my good friend Mr. CAREY, I resolved to *keep moving*, in order to preserve the advantages of my practice, and the better to enure myself to fatigue. I therefore resolved, for amusement, as well as a new test of my prowess, to try in what time I could walk across the more northern part of England, from sea to sea. I accordingly set out in the month of July at ten at night, from *Newcastle* to *Teignmouth*, to be there by twelve at night in order to commence my journey: I arrived at the time proposed; I went into the castle, and enquired for the sergeant of the guard, to whom I explained my purpose, and by whose permission I went to that part of the parapet next the sea, and in his presence threw a half pound stone, which I carried in my pocket, into the *north sea*. I then set out, with another stone of the same size, in my pocket, to Newcastle, whence I proceeded to *Carlisle*, and thence by the whole length of the Roman Wall, to *Bow Ness*, where I flung the other stone into the Irish Channel. I had some small wager depending on the performance of this rough journey, which was a distance of eighty-four miles: I had undertaken to perform it in *twenty-four* hours, but I completed my task in *twenty-two hours and a half*, al-

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though it rained heavily and incessantly the whole of the time, and I had no change of apparel. The only companion of my journey was my faithful dog Rosa, a female cross between the *Newfoundland* and *British mastiff* breed; she was of very large size, great strength, and inviolable fidelity to me; she had been the affectionate associate in all my journies for ten years, and both before and after the time, rendered me valuable assistance, and more than once saved my life in perilous conjunctures. The *next morning* I rose at five, and after some refreshment I crossed the *Solway Frith* about nine o'clock, and went round by the border of *Scotland*, a circuit of about forty miles, and so back to Carlisle, and returned to Newcastle, which place I reached by nine the same evening, after a day's journey over a rough and mountainous road, of *fifty-six miles*, which I completed in *fourteen hours*.

After a day or two, the assizes commenced at Newcastle, and a gentleman named *Cluney*, surveyor of the king's taxes, called on me; and, after some conversation with him on the subject of my pedestrian journies, I told him my intention of making a tour through the Highlands of Scotland, in which he encouraged me by his own descriptions of part of the scenery through which my journey would lie. He was kind enough to give me a recommendatory letter of introduction to the gentleman who was then Fort-major at *Fort St. George*, but whose name at this moment I unfortunately forget, requesting he would favour me with any information or instruction I wanted respecting the interior of the country thereabouts. I immediately prepared for the trip, provided myself with a good map, a pocket telescope, journal, pens

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and ink, with an additional pair of shoes and stockings, and a shirt, and I set out, accompanied by my faithful *Rosa*. I do not presume to give a regular detail of my tour, or minutely to state the observations which struck me on this arduous and interesting journey. It was through districts where nature puts on some of her most wild and stupendous appearances, which filled at least my humble soul with the most profound and awful sentiments towards the works of Nature, and the OMNIPOTENT ARCHITECT who formed them. I shall, therefore, restrict myself at present to little more than the mere detail of my route, sketching, as shortly as I can, such scenes and incidents as more prominently demand mention.

On the first day's march, I reached *Berwick-upon-Tweed*, and at the conclusion of the second, Edinburgh—a distance together making 118 miles. I staid there two days, and had some consultaton with the respectable bookseller, *Mr. Constable*, touching my tour, and he pressed me much to call on my return, and gave me letters of introduction to some noblemen and gentlemen whose seats lay in my course. Early on the third day I quitted Edinburgh, crossed Queensferry, and reached *Perth* in the afternoon, a distance of 40 miles, when Mr. *Mawson*, a bookseller, after receiving me very hospitably, sent his son to escort me out of town. I proceeded over a high mountainous tract of sixteen miles, to the top of that lofty mountain, celebrated by our IMMORTAL SHAKSPEARE as the scene of MACBETH's interview with the WEIRD SISTERS. Next day I reached *Dunkeld*, and visited the Blair of Athol, the beautiful seat of the Duke of Athol, where their Graces, the Duke and Duchess,

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condescended to receive me with the most gracious kindness—ordered me to be accommodated with refreshments, and to be shewn all the romantic and artificial beauties of the demesne. The servant to whose guidance I was committed, not impressed by my appearance with much feeling of respect, was observed by her Grace to treat me with offensive incivility, which her Grace immediately reproved with marked indignation. I took a respectful leave of this illustrious family, not, however, without receiving a token of munificence to help me on my journey. Thence I proceeded to *Fort St. George*, which I reached about eight on the following morning, and presented my letter of introduction from Mr. *Cluney* to the Fort Major, who received me with the greatest urbanity, and introduced me to his friend *Captain Boslyn*, of the Artillery, who was then with him, but is now quartered at Woolwich, and, who joined with his gallant friend, the Fort Major, in paying me every hospitable attention and civility; and at my departure, the Major had the goodness to send two of his soldiers to conduct me back to *Campbell Town*, whence I had come to him; and next morning he was still further kind enough to send me his boat to carry me over the *Murray Frith*, which saved me a journey round of about one hundred miles. I then proceeded onward to *Cromarty Forth*, thence over the ferry to *Tain*, and so on across the *Muckle Ferry*, to *Dunnock;* and in the evening I called at a public house, kept by a man named *Lashly*, in search of some refreshment and a bed. The former I obtained, such as it was; but the latter, I was told by the *worthy hostess*, I could not have. This good dame was a lady of gigantic stature, and otherwise of *extra proportion-*

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ate dimensions: upon a rough guess I think she could not weigh less than forty stone, Smithfield weight, *sinking the offal* (in the language of that market). She appeared to be an accomplished disciple of the *Xantippean* school, though her husband, poor man, was no *Socrates*. I should not have ventured to urge my request beyond her first stern refusal, but a Scotch gentleman then in the house, who saw my plight, backed my intreaty, and I suppose, being much the better customer, he obtained for me the *boon* of a couch for the night, none of the *softest* or *most delicately clean*. I rose by five next morning and resumed my route to *Sutherlandshire*, where I visited *Dunablain Castle*, the elegant mansion of the most Noble MARQUIS of STAFFORD, who graciously noticed me with the greatest kindness and hospitality, and ordered me abundant refreshments. He asked me many questions on the subject of my journey, and expressed much satisfaction at the accounts I gave him. I was honoured with a bed for the night at his Lordship's Castle, and next morning early resumed my journey over the summit of *Cairam Goram*, the highest and wildest mountain in all that part of Scotland, and celebrated for the abundance of the *Cairam Goram pebbles*, or inferior *topazes*, formed by our jewellers into watch-seals and trinkets. Having passed over this mountain, I proceeded to *Wick*, in *Caithnesshire*, where I slept that night, and next day went round by the sea coast to *John-o'-Groat's House*, the most northern point of Scotland. It was night when I arrived. In this dreary region, the only thing I could perceive in the shape of a house was the parish *kirk*, and the only human habitation I could discern was the *parsonage house* of the *clergyman* of

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this kirk, which I discovered by the lights in the windows. Thither I went, in the fullest confidence that I should have a humane and christian-like reception from the resident *patriarch;* and if not a supper and a bed, at *least* the *protection of his roof* to shield my head from the inclemency of the night in this lonely retreat. But, alas! I am not fated to meet *much favour* with the *Clergy*; for when I urged my humble suit as

> "A traveller benighted, and led through weary ways."
> "To *share his cot, his blessing, and repose*"

for the night, he eyed me with a surly and forbidding scowl; told me "he had no room for the reception of one of my vagrant appearance, and that I must seek elsewhere." Shocked a little, I own, at such a refusal from such a man,

> "In such a place as this, at such an hour,"

I made my retreat towards the gate of his fore-court, followed by the *more kind* and *gentle animal*, companion of my journey, and who, I really thought, seemed equally shocked with myself. The *reverend pastor* followed us, grumbling, to the gate, which he closed and bolted after us, and then turned about and gave a sharp scolding lecture to his poor old servant woman for leaving it open and letting such people in. I do not know whether this reverend gentleman was *John-o'-Groat*, himself, or any of his descendants; but, certainly, *John-o'-Groat's House* and its *venerable* owner will never again associate in my mind with the ideas of christian meekness and hospitality. This was the only clergyman of whom I asked a kindness on my journey; and he refused it.

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'Twas too dark and dreary to search for other quarters, so I laid me down on the turf, the couch of nature, with poor *Rosa* for my pillow, to eke out a sleepless night, and hope for better prospects next day. About dawn, I was roused by the trampling of horses; and the vigilant *Rosa* was instantly on the alert, and challenged their approach by barking. I found the noise was occasioned by some men taking horses to pass over the Pentland Frith. I explained to them my situation, and they civilly conducted me over the ferry, and directed me to a house where I got a bed and some refreshment. I remained in that neighbourhood the whole of the day, and viewed every thing curious around it; and thence I proceeded to the elegant mansion of the EARL of CAITHNESS, where I experienced the most condescending kindness from the noble Earl and his amiable Countess, who not only treated me with the utmost hospitality, but brought me to their table at every meal, with a numerous circle of friends then at their mansion, conversed with me most affably on the subject of my journey during the three days I remained there, and on my departure, the worthy Earl himself accompanied me on foot above a mile on my way, and kindly slipt a *Guinea* into my hand at parting. I then proceeded towards the promontory of *Dunnot Head*, and walked to parts of it where the country people told me human feet had never before ventured to traverse. I next proceeded to *Thurso*, and after remaining two days, explored my way through the wild interior of the country, trusting to the guidance of my faithful dog, who, by instinctive vigilance, guarded me against many dangers, in which, if alone, I should have

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perished. I returned to *Fort George*, where the worthy *Governor* and *Capt. Boslyn* redoubled their former kindness. Hence I took the road to *Inverness*, skirted the banks *Loch Ness*, and to the *Fall of Fers*. I there met two students from Aberdeen, who thankfully accepted my guidance to see this cataract in all its views, and afterwards treated me to dinner at the Inn; from thence I went towards *Fort Augustus*, where I met with a *Mr. Frazer*, a relative of the unfortunate *Lord Lovatt*, to whom I had a letter of introduction, and from whom I had a most kind and hospitable reception. I pursued my journey to *Fort Augustus* by the line of the lakes, crossed *Loch Eryth*, and called on Mr. DONALD, *Laird of Glengarie*, to whom I had a letter of introduction from Mr. FRAZER, *of Lovatt*. The laird received me very hospitably, and sent his servant to conduct me to a high mountain on his own estate. This Gentleman, on my return, entertained me four days at his house, and invited a party of his friends to hear my narrative. They had read some accounts of me in the Northern Newspapers, wherein I was honoured with the like favourable notice to which I have now gratefully to acknowledge from the Editors of the London Journals. On the fifth morning, I took my leave of this kind Gentleman and his friends. He ordered his boat to be manned for me to repass the Lake to my former track, and I proceeded towards the stupendously high mountain of *Ben Nevis*. After refreshing about ten miles from the foot of this mountain, I approached the base, and met there a shepherd lolling on the heath, to whom I offered *half a crown* to conduct me up the mountain, but he demanded *ten shillings;* I refused this, and undertook to

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explore it with no guide but my dog. I began my ascent precisely at twelve o'clock, and it was *three* before I could reach the summit, with my utmost endeavours. I explored the celebrated stone room, cut out of the solid rock, so much celebrated by travellers, and then I proceeded to scale the lofty crags that crown the summit, and pierce the very clouds with their pinnacles. I had heard and read that a stone thrown down the perpendicular from the top of these crags, would not fall direct to the base, but would strike repeatedly against the rock, either through the attraction of the great mass, or the pressure of the air against its side; and I therefore had filled my pockets with stones, resolved to try the experiment. I threw stones down the perpendicular six times successively, and found the story perfectly verified, for they not only struck repeatedly in their fall against the side of the rock, but produced a *knell* each time like the ringing of a distant bell. I remained on the mountain till six in the afternoon, a good deal exhausted, having taken no provisions with me. I then began to descend, and by the time I had come down one-third from the summit, I was quickly enveloped in a dense and dark cloud, which covered the hill as far as I could see, which was not more than a few yards on all sides. These vapours are frequent in this lofty region, continue sometimes for weeks, and often prove fatal to the bewildered traveller. I found it was dangerous to pursue my descent, even with the utmost caution, the steep was so rapid, and every where interspersed with shelves and precipices. My faithful dog, who had hitherto preceded my steps, now came to a spot beyond which she would not proceed, but barked and

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howled piteously. I suspected she had discovered a precipice, and could see no way to avoid it but by a dead stop. I could not see half a yard forward. The darkness of the evening was coming on, and greatly increased by the fog. I leaned back against the side of the mountain, and pitched one or two of the stones I had in my pocket a few feet before me; and listening attentively to mark their noise when they reached the bottom, I was soon taught to calculate by their sound, and the time of their descent, that I must be within a few inches of a tremendous precipice, and that a single step farther would precipitate me over the brink, when I must have been dashed to pieces on the rocks below. For the first time in my route, I trembled with horror at my situation. I strove to re-ascend the mountain by the devious path I had come down, but that path was invisible. To clamber up the steep of the mountain was impossible, nor could even my dog be induced to attempt it. I had, therefore, no other alternative than to remain fixed for the night in my airy and most perilous situation. I dared not venture to dose, for immediate destruction would be the consequence; I therefore endeavoured to secure my position by grasping with one hand some heath-bushes growing immediately behind me, and to guard my other hand from the piercing cold of the night by keeping in contact with the body of my dog, who sat trembling between my feet and kept my legs warm; and I alternately changed hands as that which grasped the heath was numbed or tired. The dense fog, after an hour or two, dissolved into rain, which fell in sheets, and a deluge of water, mixed with sand, came tumbling down the mountain over my whole

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person in a continued torrent, drenched me from head to foot, and filled my bosom and small clothes with sand and mud, while my poor dog, who participated this

"Pelting of the pityless storm,"

trembled and whined most feelingly. Patience was my only resource. As the fog abated, I could perceive lights in the distant cottages round the mountain's base. I bellowed and shouted my utmost, but in vain, for even if I was heard, *aid* was impracticable. The morning's dawn, however, began to cheer my wearied spirits, and as the fog was dissipated by the sun, about six o'clock, I had a sight of the dreadful precipice just at my *toe*, which was a fall of about 200 feet! With trembling steps scrambling by the heath bushes, I regained, with frequent slips and dangers, the path by which I had descended, and found another, by which I reached the foot of the mountain, with my valued companion. But, here, again, another difficulty opposed my way; a river, which flowed near the mountain's base through a ravine, probably excavated by successive torrents for ages, was so swelled by the night's rain as to spread to a width of about 60 or 70 feet, and rushed with such rapidity as to render fording impracticable. I explored along the bank for some shallower place to cross, but in vain; at length I found a branch of a tree, about eight or nine feet in length, probably torn by the winds from its parent trunk, and carried down by some former torrent; with this I sounded the depth of the flood, and at length found a spot about three feet deep, and rather narrower than the rest. Here I stripped, placed my clothes and travelling bundle on the back of *Rosa*, and prepared to cross with her support

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under one arm, *crutchwise*, as she had often aided me before in similar situations, and with the stick in the other hand, I alternately sounded the depth, and supported myself; I was confident if I passed beyond my depth, Rosa would, with the *hereditary fidelity* of her *Newfoundland ancestors*, save me from drowning, and bear me to the opposite side; fortunately I was able to wade over with my chin above water, and having gained the bank, hastened to a *peat-built* cottage at some distance, where I found the poor owner busy in cutting up some sticks, and his good wife occupied in cooking his homely breakfast of hasty-pudding, made (as it may be requisite to translate for my luxurious readers) of *oatmeal*, *water*, and a *little salt*, which however was *ambrosia* to me at such a moment. This poor couple, with countenances (not like the churlish brow of the reverend patriarch at *John-o'-Groat's*) beaming with good nature and undissembled pity for my situation, hastened to assist me in the ablution of my person, wrapt me in a warm blanket, and cordially pressed me to partake of their homely but wholesome repast, which I did, and swallowed as greedily as an *epicure* at a *turtle-feast*. While the good woman was squeezing the water from my clothes, her husband disappeared; but I soon found it was only to acquaint his *Laird*, who lived near, of my situation. He soon came back, accompanied by two servants carrying a fine blanket, in which they clothed me, and repeating their master's request that I would come to his house, I hastened, and quickly found myself in the hospitable mansion of PATRICK CAMPBELL, Esq. the *Laird of Glen Nevis*, who received me with the most cordial kindness, ordered me a shirt and a suit

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of his own clothes, insisted on my *amending* my first breakfast by a plentiful and most pallateable supplement of *tea, coffee, fresh eggs,* and *cold ham.* He offered me WINE and some of the *national cordial* WHISKEY; but I declined both with thanks, as I drank no beverage stronger than *milk, tea,* or *water,* throughout my journey. I was then ushered to a comfortable warm bed, and slept till two o'clock, and even my *four-footed friend Rosa* was well attended to. I was summoned to dinner before three o'clock, and found with the family a party of officers from the neighbouring garrison and a number of gentlemen of the vicinity, whom Mr. Campbell had that morning invited to dine, and hear the details of my adventures. Next morning, I expressed a wish to re-ascend the mountain for a more minute survey than I had before enjoyed. He sent his servant with a horse to carry me over the river, to its base, by a more practicable ford, with orders to wait there my return; I again visited the square room on the summit, and on a leaf of my pocket journal, I wrote a note signed with my name, and shortly descriptive of my visit and perils on the preceding day; which note I placed in a niche of the rocky wall, secured by a stone from the influence of the wind, for the next visitor to find. I returned in the evening, and next day Mr. CAMPBELL sent one of his servants for this note, which he forwarded (with some anecdotes of me) to the editor of a Scottish Magazine, in which it afterwards appeared.

From this gentleman, I learned the melancholy fate of a landscape painter, who had ascended the same mountain about five months before, to take some views of the wild and romantic scenery. This unfor-

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tunate gentleman, it was supposed, had been overtaken, as I had, by one of the dense fogs, and probably wandering to find a path for his return, tumbled over a precipice and was dashed to pieces. His remains—merely his *bones, picked of the flesh, and scarcely connected by their ligaments*, (the work of the foxes that abound in those mountains) were found two months afterwards on the rocks where he fell; and near those remains were the tattered remnants of his clothes, and his drawing implements and papers strewed about. The sad relics of this unfortunate artist were collected, put into a coffin, and decently interred in the churchyard of Glen Nevis, at Mr. Campbell's expence.

After a lapse of three hospitable days, I took my leave of this worthy gentleman, and crossed the country to *Glenco*, the scene of the *celebrated*, but HORRIBLE massacre of the obnoxious clans in the reign of WILLIAM III. The mountain here is a mile in perpendicular height, and the glen, through which I travelled all night, is fourteen miles long. Nothing remarkable happened in the course of my progress to *Tindrum*, in *Argyleshire*, the principal town. I proceeded to the banks of *Loch Lomond*, crossed that celebrated lake, and ascended the steep and lofty *Alp of Ben Lomond*, which I found much more difficult of access than any other that I visited; the white masses which crown the summit, and appear at a distant view as perpetual *snow*, I found to be no other than *rocks* of *spar*, which form, as it were, a *diadem* for the mountain, and with fragments of which I filled my pockets, and afterwards brought them to *Glasgow*. I then descended and traversed round the margin of this silvery lake, which, with the ascent and descent

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of the mountain, I estimated at about sixty miles; this occupied me three days. I then proceeded to the famous rock where *Dumbarton Castle* is seated, and where the renowned *Sir William Wallace* was taken prisoner. I had a letter to *Captain Halliday*, then Governor of this castle, who treated me with great urbanity, and shewed me every thing curious in this famous fortress, and amongst other curiosities, the preserved body of a *trout*, which had liven *ten years* in a stone trough in the garrison. From thence I returned to *Glasgow*, passed through *Lanark* to see the famous cotton mills, and afterwards visited the celebrated *Falls* of the *Clyde*. I then proceeded back to Edinburgh, and in my way visited the seat of His Grace the Duke of Hamilton, where I was received with the most condescending politeness and attention by *Lord Archibald*, and hospitably entertained. I afterwards proceeded from Edinburgh home, by the *Cheviot Hills* and *Carlisle*, after an absence of *six weeks* and *three days*, during which I had traversed about 2000 miles.

My children received me with cordiality; but in a very short time commenced the series of my bitterest misfortunes. I shall forego a little the detail, just to mention that *Rosa*, my faithful companion, guide, and safeguard, in my long journies for ten successive years, worn out by fatigues, and exhausted almost to a skeleton, died while one of my family was nursing and feeding her with warm milk; and thus left me to lament the loss of the most truly faithful and unchangeable friend I ever had.

From this moment all my happiness and hopes were destroyed by causes of a different nature. My wife,

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the mother of my five children, whom I (perhaps delusively) flattered myself had been a *chaste* and *faithful* partner of my conjugal affections, I saw but too much reason now to consider in quite a different light. I found her reception of me cold, and her affections quite estranged from me; and, from what I had learned, upon authority I could not doubt, of the continual visits daily, during my absence, of *a person* whom I have mentioned before, and whom a sense of *honour*, of *religion*, and of *duty*, should have rendered rather the guardian of my wife's fidelity, than the betrayer both of that and of my confidence, gave me but too palpable reasons to consider him as the destroyer of my peace. I found my family and business neglected—my substance wasted—myself despised and maltreated; and, from the gross and unguarded instances I had witnessed of her conduct, I found that conjugal happiness for me was no more.

Embarrassing circumstances had obliged me, at different times, to borrow small sums of her uncle and mine, Mr. *John Bell*, amounting to 20*l.* and for this sum, as he had done before, he peremptorily called on me at a moment when I was unable to pay; and, to avoid a gaol at his suit, I was obliged to give him the undertaking of my attorney for 24*l.* debt and costs.

There was an *honest gentleman*, Mr. O. an officer of militia, from a neighbouring county, from whom, previous to his subsequent embarrassments, I obtained a lease of some freehold property in the county, which I held from him for four years, and regularly paid him the stipulated rent. This property, which consisted in houses, I let out to under tenants for con-

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siderable profit. This gentleman became a prisoner for debt in Newcastle gaol; and his attorney served notices on my tenants not to pay their rents in future to *me*, but to *him*; and, upon inquiring the cause of this, was informed that the worthy Captain said he never had any power to let me the premises, because he was an uncertificated bankrupt at the time.

Wholly ignorant of the steps I should pursue to obtain justice, as the tenants refused to pay me any rent, I applied to a *worthy* attorney in the town, whose name I will not *venture* to mention (as *truth*, I understand, would not secure me against an action for *libelling* so worthy a gentleman). He undertook to proceed for the recovery of my rents, which my tenants paid over to O.'s assigns, under the terrors of a threatened law-suit. My worthy attorney, however, gave me the strongest assurances of success, and had from me different sums, amounting to about 100*l.* on the plea of defraying the expences of law proceeding; but when, through inability, I refused to advance more, without some satisfactory explanation, I found myself deserted by my good law agent; and I was ultimately at the loss of my *rents* and the sum I had paid as costs. Captain **** was in prison, when I was afterwards introduced to him at the request of his attorney, and in the presence of another, who attended on my behalf, and, after some conversation, Captain **** proposed to renew the lease of the premises before mentioned to me, and reinstate me in the receipt of the rents, provided I would pass my bill for 53*l.* to release him from a bill of costs with his attorney. To this, with the *advice* of *my attorney*, I unwarily assented. The bill was passed, and an order

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given in my presence to his attorney, to make out a lease of the premises to me; but before the bill became due, I learned, with astonishment, that the Captain's attorney had served *fresh* notices to the tenants not to pay me any rent; nor was the promised lease ever made out for me. Of course, when my bill became due, not having received any value for it, and the conditions on which it was passed not having been fulfilled, I *foolishly* thought myself justified in refusing to pay. But I was soon woefully convinced that *law* and *equity* are very different things; for the Captain's attorney proceeded against me on my bill, which I was obliged to pay, after a verdict against me, with costs to the amount of 11*l.*

Embarrassed by these successive losses, I was arrested for a just debt of my own, of 20*l.* which I was unable to pay, and thrown into gaol. My worthy wife refused to render me any assistance, or support me in prison, and would not herself, nor suffer my children to come near me; but, after remaining in confinement for some time, I had the good fortune to be released with other prisoners, on a compromise of my debt being paid from the fund (benevolently appropriated by the gallant and generous Lord Collingwood) for the release of persons imprisoned for small debts.

My credit was now gone, and I was shunned even by the most intimate of my former friends, like one infected with the plague. I obtained employment from several gentlemen of the law, in serving notices, supœnas, &c. for a livelihood, seeing my wife would give me nothing; and, as a further proof of her *kindness*, she prevailed on another person to whom I owed 20*l.* to arrest me, my absence from home being

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very convenient for her purposes; but, from this new embarrassment, I was, after a little time, extricated by the interference of a remaining friend. In fact, I was a most troublesome and obnoxious inmate of my own house, because a constant stumbling block to the infamous intrigues of my wife and the intercourse of her paramours, while I was under the roof. For a long course of time I had the mortification to learn frequent instances of the courses she was following, and in about twelve months from the period of the event last-mentioned, she being unable to find any person to whom I was indebted, except *my own brother*, she joined her influence with that of her good uncle and the captain, whom I have before mentioned as the principal authors of my ruin, to prevail on my deluded *brother* to arrest me for a debt of 40*l.* I owed him. Under what cruel pretences or mis-statements they were enabled to persuade my brother to this act of cruelty and unkindnes, I am at a loss to conceive; but it was a wound to my heart, deeper, if possible, than all I had previously suffered. I was again thrown into gaol, destitute of all support but the charity of my fellow prisoners, to whom, in return, I rendered every servile assistance they chose to ask of me; and I believe I should ultimately have perished but for an extraordinary incident, in which my favourite practice of WALKING procured me a most seasonable relief. My celebrity in that line became, accidentally, the subject of conversation in the gaol, when I proposed for a small wager, to walk FIFTY MILES IN TWELVE HOURS, *within the prison walls*. This was a feat which appeared so utterly impracticable, that my challenge was readily accepted.

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A small yard in the prison, measuring but *thirty-three feet* by *twenty-five and* a *half*, was chosen as the stage of action. I commenced, and performed the task, in *four minutes and forty-three seconds less* than the time, to the great disappointment and wonder of my antagonists. In the course of this walk I took no less than ten thousand three hundred turns of the yard. The wager was but *three pounds one shilling*, and to enable me to raise the amount of my stake, at the outset, I was obliged to pledge my watch, an old family one, which I kept, under all my distresses, and valued almost as much as my life, and part of my few remaining clothes; and the prize was to me a most seasonable relief, (beside procuring for me much friendly aid from visitors to the prison) which those alone can estimate who have felt the miseries of imprisonment, bereft of friends and hopes.

Amongst the number of my fellow prisoners, then in the gaol, was a man who had been formerly an eminent corn-dealer in that part of the country; but, having been declared a bankrupt, he was committed to gaol by the Commissioners under his statute, on the alledged charge of not making a full disclosure of his effects. I forbear to mention his name here, least the law of libel should subject me to new severities for presuming to reflect on his pure character. He had been several years in the gaol before I became an inmate; but, though insolvent, as to the claims of his creditors, he found out the *mystery* of living extravagantly in gaol, and finding money to supply his pleasures and entertain some favourites of his acquaintance. To this worthy gentleman it was my fate to minister as *cook* and *valet-de-chambre*, in the course of which services I found that

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his chief resource for supplies was the laudable pursuit of procuring or purchasing from his fellow prisoners and others who came into the gaol to aid his traffick, *receipts* they had taken for sums above forty shillings in the course of their dealings, but incautiously written on paper without *stamps*—and by lodging informations and commencing Exchequer suits against the writers, to recover the penalties under the stamp act, with the aid of some goodly attornies of his acquaintance; and, between penalties recovered, and monies paid for compromising such suits, he drove a pretty lucrative trade, and had the *merit* of *serving* the *revenue*, besides putting handsome costs into the pockets of his law friends. As the prison was rather crowded with about forty prisoners, I became the *bedfellow* as well as the *valet* of this gentleman, and so continued for about eight months. He, by some means, discovered that I had in my possession a great number of receipts for money paid by me in the course of my own and other persons business, amounting together to 14 or 1500*l.* very many of which were without stamps. He made frequent and importunate applications to me for those receipts, as new supplies for his speculation; but I *peremptorily* and *obstinately* refused to become, in such a way, the instrument of oppressive extortion upon a multitude of unwary persons, on whose integrity I had relied too much to suppose they would ever take advantage of a circumstance, which as frequently arose from the impossibility of procuring stamps at the time and place they were written as from any other cause; but the persevering obstinacy of my refusal to minister in such a way to my *patron's* interests, converted him into an inveterate enemy, and attracted towards me

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all the effects of his vengeance. He found no difficulty to induce some of the most unprincipled of my fellow prisoners, by the influence of *beer* and *spirits*, plentifully lavished, to insult and maltreat me on every occasion. I was knocked down and buffeted without mercy by those ruffians, and without the slightest provocation or feasible pretence. One of the most robust and desperate of this gang used all his endeavours to provoke me to a pitched battle with him; but, unable to induce me to a contest so unequal, he knocked me down in the most brutal manner, and literally tore the clothes from my back, to create a pretence that I had stripped to fight him. He beat me most unmercifully, struck my face against the flagged floor, and would probably have put an end to my life, but for the interference of *a person in authority there*, who owed equal protection to all the persons confined, whose protection I had before solicited in vain; who constantly winked at the assaults and injuries committed on my person, but who, probably, did not now wish to abide the risque consequent on seeing me beaten to death within his jurisdiction. I had even repeatedly applied, but in vain, to other *personages* in *much higher authority*, who occasionally visited the gaol, but who turned a deaf ear to my complaints. These are *facts* which I could readily substantiate before any court of justice if I were called to give evidence, but it was not for a poor, oppressed, unfriended man, like me, to wrestle with *authority*, or *touch* the *whiskers* of *power*, at the risk of being *devoured*.

This person, who now, for the first time, interfered to rescue me from brutal outrage, aided by three soldiers of the prison guard, raised me from the flagged

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floor, bruised, bleeding, and naked as I was, and thrust me into the lobby on the stair-case. Not feeling myself safe under such a protector, I took refuge in a kind of closet within my access, and locked myself in this place. I remained naked, as I was, all night, in the bitterest season of frost and snow, before an open unglazed window. I was repeatedly and urgently desired to come forth under assurance of protection and liberty to retreat to my bed-room; but no sooner had I complied, than instead of being permitted to go to bed, I was seized, hand-cuffed, and immediately consigned to a dungeon called the *Black Hole*, naked, bruised, and bleeding as I was, and confined there in that state for seven hours, at which time my enlargement was decreed. I presumed again to remonstrate on the cruelty I had suffered, but this served as a ground for new injury. I was knocked down, and my head striking against a nail in my fall, which wounded me severely, I was again consigned to the black-hole, and there confined so long, that the worthy author of all those mischiefs, alarmed at the apprehension of my death, and probably fearful of being implicated as an accessary, interfered to obtain my liberation; but I was unable to move, and was actually carried, from the floor of this dungeon where I lay, up stairs, to my wretched bed-room, where it was some considerable time before I recovered, under the care of the physician. I ventured, though hopeless, to complain once more to a *worthy Alderman*, who must here be nameless for the reasons already stated; but the consolation I received, was a significant threat, that if I gave any more trouble, I should be worse off—for I should be transferred to the felons' side.

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I continued a prisoner, still subject to similar insults, until the 4th of July following, when my *humane* and *generous brother*, having learned through the representation of a commiserating friend of mine, the hardships and persecuting injuries I had endured under his imprisonment, *liberally* consented to my enlargement, in *consideration* of *his claim being compounded* by *the payment* of 10*l.* which the same kind benevolent friend, *Mr. James Faudé*, whom I am proud to mention with gratitude, paid forthwith, and procured my discharge.

After I had returned some time to my own house, I was in hopes the storm of my misfortunes had abated; but no such good fortune was reserved for me. I found the conduct of my unfeeling wife so flagitiously infamous, that I pointedly reproached her with her infidelities; this provoked from her such outrageous and cutting abuse, that, maddened beyond all patience, I struck her, in my rage. She swore the peace against me, and had sway enough with those in authority to have me committed for the assault, to the *felon's* gaol; but my *brother* was prevailed on to join a friend in bailing me out, and the prosecution against me was, for that time, compromised. In about twelve months after, *new*, and if possible, *more frequent* and *flagrant* instances of my wife's abandonment enraged me to strike her again, upon which, she, being a robust woman, seized me by the throat, and dragged me to the ground: and while I was struggling to extricate myself from her deadly grasp, *my own eldest son*, a *youth of seventeen years of age*, espousing the violence of his mother, took from the fire a *red hot poker*, struck me with it on several parts of my body, and so deperately wounded and bruized my

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left leg, as to be attended with consequences, which not only threatened the necessity of amputation, but seriously endangered my life, by apparent mortification. To complete the kindness of this filial attack, he ran and fetched a constable, under whose custody I was confined in a temporary prison four or five days, and then on the examination of him and his mother before the magistrate, I was committed a prisoner to the felon's gaol, to abide my trial. Here my wound was attended with the utmost care and humanity, by *Doctor Fife*, who frequently expressed his apprehension of a mortification, and thought amputation would be nesessary to prevent it; but through his skill and kindness I recovered, after a considerable time, without the loss of a limb, although a consequent *lameness* attaches to this hour. At the ensuing quarter sessions, my wife exhibited against me articles of the peace, and I was held to bail, which her *kind* interference with all my acquaintance prevented me from obtaining. At length I prevailed on a person who attended the prison, for a premium of fifteen pounds, raised by the sale of some little pieces of plate and a friendly loan, to procure another with himself to bail me, and in consequence obtained my enlargement. But within *ten days afterwards*, my wife, by a counter premium of twenty pounds to the *same men*, endeavoured to prevail on them to surrender me, and relinquish their security, she declaring her intention to have me confined for life. But, by the earnest advice of two friends, *George Auckland* and *William Brown*, one of my tenants, and as the only mode to be rid of her persecutions, I got away from the town, and escaped from all further connexion with her; at

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seven o'clock on the following morning, which was the seventh of February, 1814, in bitter weather, with no clothes but those on my back, and *two shillings and nine pence* in my pocket, leaving my *worthy* wife in full possession of her privilege to follow the abandoned course she had adopted, while I should seek, if possible, quietness and comfort in some other place, ill capacitated, at my time of life, to earn a livelihood where I was an utter stranger.

Fortunately, I had before contrived to extract from her grasp some little remains of plate, the sale of which brought me about three pounds. I directed my course to *Durham*, where I purchased some childrens' books and pamphlets, to sell through the country for the means of lodging and food, determined to explore my way towards *London*, where I was not without hope of obtaining some further aid by my favourite faculty of walking. Various men are variously gifted—some depend on their *heads*, but my hope was in my *heels:* and though I could not *Dance* for bread at the *Opera*, or *Bartholomew Fair*, I had heard of the walking feats and fame of *Captain Barclay*, whom I had seen, and though I could not aspire as a candidate to *fashionable favour* in the *sporting* world, I knew there was a generous, liberal, open-hearted Gentleman, a Mr. JOHN BULL, who would stand the friend of *merit* without examining *pedigrees;* and that if a *military* Gentleman, by a *forced march* of a *thousand miles* in a *thousand hours*, could win such a prize as a *thousand guineas*, a poor man, by performing *the like* task within *less than half the time*, might have some chance of moderate success.

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I reached *Cambridge* some time in March, where I met a generous friend, a *Mr. Taite*, who treated me with the greatest kindness and hospitality for five weeks that I remained there, and liberally lent me some money, which I repaid from my earnings before my departure. I then came up to London, purchased some books and pamphlets, and in a day or two went to *Rumford*, where I sold the better part of them. I then transferred my little traffic to *Gravesend*, and thence to *Woolwich*, in which latter place I received great encouragement from the Military Gentlemen at the Barracks, where I was almost a daily visitor, till the beginning of May. Early in June, I called at a public house near *Shooter's Hill*, for some refreshment. There were some persons there in conversation about walking and *Captain Barclay*; and I ventured to profess my own ability in that way. In the course of conversation, I offered to accept a moderate wager at odds, that I would walk 96 miles in 24 hours. It was agreed to bet me *twenty pounds* to *five*, against my performance. Confident of success, I accepted the wager. I had but *two pounds ten shillings* towards my stake, and to raise the remainder I deposited with the landlord my *stock in trade*; a spot was chosen, and the ground measured on the Shooter's Hill road, and the 30th of August was fixed for the decision of the bet. I commenced that morning at eight o'clock, and completed my task on the 31st, in *twenty-three hours and a half*. This was the first step to my celebrity in the neighbourhood of London; and several Gentlemen from Woolwich Barracks, and elsewhere, who saw my performance, were pleased to mark their approbation,

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by kindly obtaining for me a *subscription purse of* 30*l.* which enabled me to pay several small debts and maintain myself by my little traffic.

From that time I continued to ply my small trade about *Woolwich* and *Blackheath*; many of the Gentlemen who had witnessed my walk at *Shooter's Hill*, frequently urged me to undertake some other match, and promised to raise a Subscription for my trouble; adding, that I should also be handsomely rewarded by the winners on my performance. I offered to start whenever a Subscription of One Hundred Guineas should be made up for me, and walk a THOUSAND MILES in TWENTY DAYS. Whether my capacity for such a task seemed wholly incredible, I know not; but I understood, four months since, that the Subscription was set on foot, and I began to make my preparations, by first applying to the Magistrates assembled at the *Mitre*, in *Greenwich*, signifying to their Worships my intention, and requesting to know if I might hope for their permission? After some interrogation, they were kind enough to express their opinions, "that the thing was impossible; but, however, that I should have their permission and their protection, if I desired it." I retired, expressing my thanks;—but nearly four months had elapsed without my hearing more of the Subscription. I was still urged by many to announce my proposal publicly, to start at a given day in all events, and depend on the liberality of Gentlemen, who should be spectators, for an ample reward. I declined this upon what I thought so precarious a ground; but having conversed with *Mr. Bleksly*, the friendly and generous host of the *Hare* and *Billet* on *Blackheath*, to whose kindness I have been since so eminently indebt-

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ed, he encouraged me by an assurance, that in all events, *he* would engage I should make 20*l.* by the business, if I performed my engagement, even if he paid it from his own pocket; but that if I failed in the attempt, he would in all events charge me nothing for my board, lodging, and refreshments, during the experiment. Upon this liberal promise I determined to start on a given day. As soon as my determination was known, it was rumoured that I was to start for a wager of a Thousand Guineas; that other bets to an incalculable amount were pending on the issue, and that I was to receive a certain reward of One Hundred Guineas for my trouble. I was extremely anxious to guard myself against the suspicion of being *under the influence* of any set of men, who might be supposed to have the absolute controul of my conduct, and after having MADE or PROCURED bettings on the result, to be able *at their option* to *decide whether I should* SUCCEED or FAIL in the task. Such things I am told have been frequently done on the *turf* and the *boxing stage*, and certainly if I were capable of lending myself to so base a project, I should deserve the just abhorrence of the Magistrates, whose duty it would be to detect and punish to the utmost of their power, any scheme so concerted to defraud the unwary. But though a *poor* and an *embarrassed man*, I had an UNIMPEACHABLE CHARACTER to lose, and I was resolved, that, in all events, the Public should know the real grounds on which I started. I therefore had the following Advertisement printed in a Hand Bill and distributed to the community.

" GEORGE WILSON, Pedestrian, aged fifty years, proposes to perform the labourious task of walking One Thou-

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sand Miles, in the space of Twenty Days, at the rate of Fifty Miles a Day, a task which, if accomplished, will never have been surpassed—to commence on Monday, the 11th of September, 1815, on Blackheath, at Six o'Clock in the Morning.

" In order that he may endeavour to accomplish it, he wishes a Subscription of One Hundred Pounds to be raised amongst the Gentlemen of Woolwich and its vicinity, as a remuneration for so arduous an undertaking.

" G. W. further proposes to such as may become Subscribers, that should his endeavours prove unsuccessful, he shall not be entitled to the Subscription; but the Subscribers will be at liberty to divide it amongst themselves, or dispose of it any other way best calculated to their inclination.

" G. W. further adds, that as there will be two Sundays during the performance of the task in question, he intends resting on each of those days, from ten till one o'clock in the forenoon, which will greatly enhance the difficulty of the undertaking.

" G. W. begs to observe, that it shall be left to the Subscribers to appoint a Committee for each day, to manage the business, not exceeding five, as the affairs of each day may accrue."

I then had, once more, the honour of waiting on the Worshipful Bench of Magistrates at the *Mitre Tavern, Greenwich*, to renew my solicitation for their leave to proceed; and I sent up my printed bill, with an intimation, that I was in waiting to know their pleasure. I was ordered into their presence, and after a few questions, they were pleased to repeat their former leave, and promise of their protection whenever I required it; and some of the gentlemen were pleased to add, with condescending affability, that they would come and see my performance.

Every thing being thus adjusted for commencing, I

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was to start at six o'clock on the ensuing Monday morning, Sept. 11. I had not so much as a *single shilling* wager of my own on the event, and on the night before I started, the whole stock of my *cash* amounted to just *three-pence-halfpenny*.

A *mile heat*, in the *racing* phrase, having been measured from the starting-post opposite the *Hare and Billet* public-house on Blackheath, running an irregular circuit, and upon ground not the most favourable, I set out precisely at the appointed moment, *six o'clock*. The number of spectators then present, was comparatively few, but rapidly increased as the day advanced.

It would be tedious and obtrusive to detail minutely all the circumstances of my progress upon this, or, indeed, on any of the subsequent days; the newspapers having gone so fully into every incident which could in the smallest degree interest or gratify the public curiosity, not only so far as related to so humble an individual as myself, but as regarded the *innumerable other* attractions for popular attention which daily increased, and every where covered the Heath. Probably the task *I* undertook to perform, being rather extraordinary, was the *first* cause of the unusually crowded assemblage of all ranks, and I feel the most lively gratitude for the general attention and cheering encouragement which honoured my exertions from the first moment 'till the interdict of the Magistrates warrant put a sudden and unexpected period to my attempt, after fifteen days progress, in which I had completed SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILES of the THOUSAND, and removed all doubt of accomplishing the remainder within the time proposed.

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There are, however, some incidents connected with my narrative, which it may not be quite superfluous to repeat as briefly as possible, although I fear I have already obtruded too far on the kind attention of my readers.

The *first fifty* miles were completed by eight in the evening, when I retired to the house of my *first* friendly and *then only* patron in this business, *Mr. Bleksly*, the *host* of the *Hare and Billet*, a very short distance from the starting post, where I was to take rest and refreshment during the period of my experiment. But notwithstanding the kind solicitude he had evinced for my accommodation, I was so much disturbed by the noise of his other guests, that I scarcely got an hours' rest the whole of that night. Yet, notwithstanding this disadvantage, I performed the second days journey within my time, though much incommoded by the pressure of the increasing multitude; and at the close of the day's walk, I retired to the same house, which was crowded with persons anxious to see me, and also filled the room in which I sat, and much incommoded me. I saw there was as little hope of *rest* for me, on *that* as on the *preceding* night, and I plainly anticipated, that without my regular sleep, it would be impossible to sustain the health or vigour necessary for the performance of my task, and that I must, of course, disappoint public expectancy by relinquishing it—a circumstance which excited my most painful anxiety: but fortunately for me, JOHN DYER, ESQUIRE, who resides at Blackheath, and who had seen me on my walk in the morning, came to the house, pressed his way into the room where I sat, and in answer to his solicitous enquiries, I candidly told him my situation and apprehensions; upon which he generously pro-

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posed to give me a bed at his own house that night, and to make arrangements for obtaining me a private lodging on the ensuing day. I accompanied him to his residence, where I was received by his lady with the kindest attention and zeal for my accommodation and comfort, and indeed, the liberal, the generous, humane, and zealous support and protection I received from this worthy gentleman and his amiable wife and family, as well under their hospitable roof, as in every thing else which could promote my interest and success, and obtain for me the countenance and protection of their friends and connexions, both during and since my pedestrian task, shall for ever impress my heart with inexpressible feeling of respectful gratitude. Not only has the *house* and *table* of Mr. Dyer been generously opened to me, but his advice, his care, his protection, and his influence continually exerted to guard me against the *sinister tricks*, *impediments*, and *interruptions*, frequently attempted on me by designing persons, in the progress of my experiment. Through his kindness I was introcuced to Dr. Lucas, who kindly and daily attended to my health, prescribed my regimen, and pointed out the most salutary modes by which I might œconomise or recruit my strength, moderate my movements, and guard against the *over exertions* to which my own anxiety might prompt me; and but for which kind aids and admonitions, it is not improbable I might have sunk under the fatigues of so continuous a journey—performed, not in the free air and uninterrupted course I had enjoyed in all my former peregrinations, but almost perpetualy hemmed in, pressed, and heated by the countless multitude through which I passed, sometimes almost stifled with *heat*

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and *dust*, and frequently *crossed* and *impeded*, by stratagem and design; for I happened to *know* there were some projects on foot, to induce me to *play booty*; and even before the commencement of my task, I was solicited to a *private interview* at the Princess of Wales public house, on the Heath, by *two* persons, I will not stile them gentlemen, who proposed to me a present of ONE HUNDRED GUINEAS down, if I would place the issue of the match at their option.

If I were disposed to accede to so base a proposal, nothing was easier than an excuse in the fallibility of my strength or the pretence of sudden illnes for a few hours; but I rejected with indignation so vile a scheme, and my answer was, "I would sooner lose "my right hand and see it consumed in the fire, than "accede to such a measure." Finding me inexorable to their purpose, and confident of my own success, they took their leave. This fact is well known, and can be proved beyond doubt. Other stratagems, still more base, were attempted in the course of my walks, and amongst numbers who, with *real* or *apparent good nature*, offered me *drink* and *cordials*, for my refreshment while on foot, there were some, I know, by *palpable experience*, who had *quite other* views in their civilities, to which my *health* or perhaps my *life* might have been sacrificed; and although I was cautioned against such attempts by my worthy and generous friends, and yet, in ONE INSTANCE I was thrown off my guard by the consummate address of two pretended friends, who prevailed on me, while exhausted by the heat, to take a *glass of drink*. But very shortly afterward, I perceived, by the disor-

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dered state of my stomach, that I was designedly *dosed*. The *poisoning* of the *race horses* at *New Market* instantly occured to my recollection. I communicated, as soon as possible, the circumstance, and my suspicions to Doctor Lucas, who kindly prescribed for me an antidote, which in the course of the day counteracted the ill effects of what I had swallowed, and quite relieved me before the next morning. From that time forth, however, I rigidly obeyed the injunctions of *Mr. Dyer* and the medical gentlemen, not on any pretence, to take *food* or drink of any sort, but from the hands of *those whom I knew to be my real friends*.

I had set out as my hand bill announced, with a determination not to continue my walks *during the hours* of *Divine service* on *Sundays*. From my own mere sense of decorum, I felt this necessary and right, even without legal prescription. But seeing *all the other* hours of the Sabbath open to the *money* getting avocations of those who minister to the popular accommodation—the *publicans*, the *coach drivers*, the *livery stables*, the *fruit sellers*, the *pastry cooks*, the *taverns*, the *tea gardens*, and the *pedestrian* and *equestrian* multitude themselves, in all quarters, I really was not conscious of any thing *immoral* or *indecorus* in my own individual walking, even though the *hope* of *some pecuniary* reward was attached to it.

But on Saturday, the sixth morning of my progress, I received the following document from a messenger of the magistrates :—

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"*At a General Meeting of his Majesty's Justices, acting in and for the Division of Blackheath, and Little-Ness, in the County of Kent, held at the Green Man Inn, Blackheath, on the 15th Day of September*, 1815."

PRESENT,
THE REV. RICHARD DAVIS,
ABRAHAM CONSTABLE,
THE REV. JOHN MESSITER,
JOHN MASON,
THE REV. DR. BURNEY,
JAMES RICE WILLIAMS,
THE REV. ARTHUR ONSLOW,
EDWARD WILLIAM FIRMAN.

RESOLVED,

That it is the opinion of the Magistrates, that George Wilson, now walking for money *upon Blackheath, cannot be allowed to proceed in his walk on* any part *of the Sabbath day.*

(*By Order of the Bench.*)
JOHN BICKNELL, Clerk.

In consequence of this resolution, it was thought necessary I should remove to some other place, and on Sunday morning at seven o'clock, the booths on the heath being struck, I was transferred to the six-mile stone on the Dover road, where I walked about fourteen miles, returned to Mr. Dyer's at eleven, and after the hours of Divine service, I proceeded again to the same place and finished my task of fifty miles by a quarter past twelve at night, under the most dreadful suffocating heat and pressure.

On Monday morning I resumed my ground on Blackheath, and continued until the following Satur-

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day; but, determined to give no umbrage to the magistrates there, it was settled that I should remove, on the next day, Sunday, to a considerable distance.

Through the friendship and alacrity of Mr. Dyer, his brother, and other friends, a carriage was obtained, and I was conveyed to West Wyckham. I commenced, but was obliged to change my ground three different times, owing to the heaviness of the road, and at length a more favourable half mile was selected, in front of *Lord Glycdir's* Park, where I was to complete the day's task. It rained continually the whole day; but, after a day and night of the most harrassing fatigue, I surmounted every difficulty, and at half past five on Monday morning, returned in a carriage with *Mr. Dyer*, *his brother*, *Mr. Whittle*, and others, to the house of the former gentleman, almost exhausted; and after sleeping about three hours, I was able to resume my task once more on the Heath, the ensuing morning, at a quarter before twelve o'clock.

Being come to the starting post, and still *stiff* and *sore*, under the effects of Sunday, I ventured to address the multitude, who immediately surrounded me, to the effect following:

"Gentlemen—I have now completed my seven hundredth mile, quite to my own satisfaction, and I hope to yours. In having accomplished so much of my task, I have done as much as any pedestrian who has preceded me, in the same time, and I am now about to commence three hundred more miles, which I hope I shall be permitted to perform without molestation. This will be more than any other man has hitherto done. I am but a poor man, and I have no wish to give offence to any person—indeed I would rather put up with in-

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sult, and I have been exposed but to too many, than be thought captious or ill-mannered. In starting this morning I have only to request you will give me room—it is all the accommodation I want. A free circulation of air is almost as necessary to me as food, and I entreat you will keep at a distance.

At the conclusion of the first mile I again addressed the multitude as follows :—

"I have now, Gentlemen, gone one mile more than any pedestrian, under similar circumstances; and, with the help of Providence, I have no doubt I shall complete the whole, *one thousand miles* within the twenty days. I feel myself well and comfortable, and I sincerely hope the Magistrates of this county will not feel it necessary to disturb me. I mean no disrespect to these gentlemen; but I am quite unconscious of having, in any one instance, been instrumental to riot or confusion. If, however, they are determined to stop me, I must only declare, that my failure does not arise from any want of physical strength."

I was graciously cheered, and permitted to proceed; but still, through the variety of impediments I met from the crowd, and possibly some remains of the preceding day's fatigue, I was not able to complete my 750th mile till twenty minutes before *six o'clock* on Tuesday morning; when, after five hours rest, I again appeared at the post to resume my task, having now put my *ultimate success beyond all question*, and being in improved condition. I had completed about the first mile and quarter, when information was given to Mr. Whittle, who accompanied me, to keep off the crowd—that a possee of peace officers were coming to apprehend me, by the authority of a Warrant from the Bench of District Magistrates, of which the following is a copy:

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"Kent (to wit). To the High Constable of the upper half hundred of Blackheath, in the county of Kent, and to all other officers of the peace of the said county.

"Forasmuch as it appears to the Justices (to wit) The Rev. Dr. Watson; the Rev. Dr. Burney; the Rev. J. Messiter; the Rev. Arthur Onslow; Col. Jones; J. Williams; G. Trenchard Goodenough; J. Mason, and R. Smith, Esqrs. this day in petty sessions assembled, at the Mitre Tavern, in Greenwich, in the county of Kent, upon the view of the said Magistrates, that George Wilson, who has been for several days, pursuant to public advertisement, walking upon Blackheath and in the vicinity, for a remuneration in money, hath thereby drawn together, by day and night, a very tumultuous assemblage of people from the surrounding and other parishes, and occasioning a considerable interruption to the peace of the inhabitants—We have therefore to require you, and every of you, in his Majesty's name, to apprehend the said George Wilson, and bring him before us, whose names are hereunto subscribed, being Justices of the Peace for the said county, in order to his being called upon for his security for his appearance at the next General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, to be holden for the said county, then and there to answer the allegations, and also the being of good behaviour in the mean time towards his Majesty and all his liege people.

"Given under our hands and seals, the 21st day of September, 1815.

JOHN MASON, JOHN RICE WILLIAMS,
RICHARD SMITH, CHARLES BURNEY."

I was conveyed by *Mr. Whittle*, of the Bull, Shooter's Hill, in his chaise, to the house of my generous friend, Mr. Dyer, upon a supposition that I might be taken to

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complete my task in another county. The quick pursuit of the constables, however, defeated this arrangement, if, on consideration, it had been thought adviseable, and I was finally delivered into the custody of Mr. Smith, the High Constable of Greenwich, who, it is but justice to say, conducted himself to me with as much humanity as his unpleasant office would permit. I was placed in a carriage surrounded by constables, and conveyed towards Greenwich, where it was understood the Bench of Magistrates were then sitting. On reaching Croomb's Hill, however, we were met by constables returning from Greenwich, who stated, that Mr. CONSTABLE, the senior Magistrate, then at the Mitre, refused to take any cognizance of the case, the warrant having been reprobated by him in the first instance; and that *Mr. Mason*, the only other Magistrate present, and whose name was amongst the signatures to the Warrant, on hearing of my approach, was seized with *a violent fit of the gripes*, and had gone away.

Mr. SMITH, in consequence of this information, determined to take me to the house of Mr. WILLIAMS, at Lea, another of the Magistrates who had subscribed the warrant. Thither I was driven; and on arriving at the gate, the first servant of whom we enquired for his Worship, said *he was at home*; but on subsequent enquiry from a more *confidential* domestic, we were assured his Worship was abroad.

Mr. Smith, at the suggestion of Dr. LUCAS, who had kindly accompanied me, resolved not to carry me in search of other Magistrates, conceiving that my inactivity, and the lightness of my apparel, might be injurious to my health; and he conveyed me back to

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r. Dyer's, where, on the assurance and engagement of Mrs. Dyer and Doctor Lucas, that I should be forthcoming when wanted, and that I would not again appear on the Heath in the continuance of my task, he left me. Thus ended, by the interference of Magisterial power, all my hopes of fame and emolument.

From this time I remained under the hospitable roof of Mr. Dyer, and had the honour of being visited by many persons of distinction and respectability, who kindly consoled me for my mortifying interruption, and by liberal presents, proved the sincerity of their concern.

On Monday I received a letter from Mr. May, clerk to Mr. Bicknell, Clerk of the County, asking when it would be convenient to me to appear before the Bench? and upon the advice of Mr. Ellis, a Gentleman of the Law, resident on the Heath, who kindly volunteered his service in my behalf, and to whose Lady I am also indebted for the most condescending attentions during my walk, I proceeded to the Bench at Greenwich on the following day. I there saw Mr. Constable, the Senior Magistrate, who treated me with every mark of humane attention, and acknowledged his recollection of the permission I had received from the Bench of Magistrates, whereat he presided, to attempt my arduous task;—and at his suggestion I agreed to attend before their Worships on the following Thursday.

In the interim, however, I asked myself seriously, and consulted the opinion of my kind friends, as to what just ground of offence I had really given, or how I had incurred responsibility for any violation of the *peace* or *good order* of the community

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within their worships' jurisdiction. I had their *permission*, and the promise of their *protection*, in the task I had undertaken. I had not, myself, committed, nor had I heard of any one else committing, any riot, tumult, or other breach of the peace there, within the preceding fortnight. I had been suffered to proceed, without interruption from their worships, for the whole course of the time, without the slightest objection, except on the subject of *the Sabbath*, and so far as I had *there* done any thing reprehensible, had done nothing within the time of Divine service, nor within several miles of the place. The day of my apprehension was not *Sunday*—but *Tuesday* morning early, and never was any thing, as I humbly conceived, more remote from the definition of *riot*, or *disturbance of the peace*, than every thing around me at the moment of my apprehension. There was not even a booth standing at the time. The ground of imputation against me, therefore, was entirely NEW. *Fifteen days* of the time had elapsed, which I proposed to occupy in the task I had assumed with their worships permission. *Four*, or at most *five* days more, would have completed my purpose. No *Sunday* could occur in the number; and from the complexion of the past, marked by nothing worse, as I humbly conceived, than the ordinary and harmless merriment of a *country wake*, I could see no reason to apprehend riot or tumult. If there was any thing *immoral* in my *purpose*, it was a pity that their worships, whose learning and enlightened wisdom must have rendered them at all times, *before*, as well as *then*, competent judges, did not refuse me their permission—or stop me, in the *first instance*, rather than after *all* the *probable* ill con-

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sequences had occurred; and that I had sustained the labour, now abortive, of walking 750 miles.

The warrant, which appeared on the face of it to have been issued by the *joint* authority of NINE Magistrates, had the signatures of only FOUR.—ONE signature, for ALL, might, for aught I knew, have been quite sufficient. If so, the other *three* names were superfluous. But if the instrument had the sanction of *but* four, then it seemed to be the act of a *minority*: and I had always heard and understood, that in all dubious points of judgement, a *majority* of the Judges always decided the question, even in points submitted to the *twelve Judges of England*. It further stated, that the charge I had to answer was founded on the view of the *whole nine* Magistrates; but it states no date when this view was taken. However, as I was incompetent to reason on the matter, I rested in humble patience for the approaching developement; and I now find by the result, that my doubts were not quite unfounded; and that the majority of the Magistrates, whose names are inserted in the body of the warrant, not only refused it their sanction, but disapproved it as illegal, unconstitutional, and violatory to the liberty of a British subject.

On Thursday, October 5, I attended the Magistrates, and the following is an accurate and impartial report of the Proceedings, taken from THE BRITISH PRESS.

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PETTY SESSIONS.

GREENWICH, OCT. 5.

This day, at twelve o'clock, was appointed by the Bench of Kentish Magistrates, for the investigation of the charge upon which Wilson, the celebrated Pedestrian, was taken into custody, and thereby, on the sixteenth day of his arduous undertaking, prevented from its completion.

Long before the hour fixed for meeting, Mr. Kinnaird, and Mr. Harriet, two most respectable Magistrates belonging to the Thames Police Office, and who are also Magistrates for the county of Kent, arrived in the Justice Room, at the Mitre Tavern, together with several other respectable individuals. Mr. Constable, who as senior Magistrate for the Greenwich district, has usually presided at the bench, as Chairman, arrived at twelve, but it was nearly half-past twelve before he was joined by three other magistrates, namely—Mr. Smith, Mr. Mason, and lastly Mr. Williams. The latter three gentlemen signed the warrant upon which the pedestrian was apprehended. The fourth gentleman, whose name was to the instrument, Dr. Burney, did not make his appearance till the busine was all over.

An invitation having been given for the Magistrates present to retire to an adjoining room to consult, Mr. Williams and his two coadjutors retired. Mr. Constable declined any interference in their deliberations, and remained behind.

By this time the room was so crowded, that there was scarce room to stir. The absentees did not return for half an hour, when they re-entered the room, with Mr. Bicknell, the clerk of the county, by whom they had been accompanied. Having taken their seats, Mr. Williams, acting as Chairman, called for Mr. Smith, the High Constable, and asked him if he had Wilson in custody?

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Mr. Smith having answered in the affirmative, he was directed to bring forward his prisoner, who was in an adjoining room.

Mr. J. Dyer, Mr. Ellis, and Mr. Ohmann, had previously arrived in a carriage, and were followed by Wilson, and some of his other friends, in another carriage.

Wilson being brought forward,

Mr. Williams, addressing himself to Wilson, said—"I believe we have nothing to do but to call upon you to enter into sureties for your appearance at the next Quarter Sessions of the Peace, to answer for such things as shall there be alleged against you.—Are you prepared with bail?"

Wilson—"Yes, I am, Sir."

Mr. Ellis, a most respectable Solicitor residing on Blackheath, now stood up and addressed their Worships. He said he attended there as the legal adviser of the Prisoner, and it was his duty to submit, that there was no just ground for calling upon the unfortunate man to enter into recognizances; on the contrary, he was prepared to contend that he was entitled to his discharge; and this upon two grounds. The first was, that no breach of the public peace had in any way been proved against him; and the second, that the instrument upon which the Prisoner had been deprived of his liberty, was in itself illegal. With regard to the first ground, he begged leave to observe, that the warrant on its face alleged "that upon the view of the Magistrates, whose names were contained therein, George Wilson had been walking for several days, in pursuance of a public advertisement, on Blackheath, for a remuneration in money, and had thereby collected together, by night and by day, a tumultuous assemblage of people." From this he must infer that the burden of the charge against the Prisoner was his having collected together a *tumultuous assemblage of people*, Now, if this had been the case, it was surely capable of proof; but he would ask, where that proof was—and, without the proof, by what authority were the Magistrates empowered to deprive a subject of his liberty? It was not even stated in the warrant that the Magistrates themselves had attended, but simply, "on view"—whether that view was ideal or substantial, or had taken place at all, did not appear. Upon these points he submitted, on the first head, that there was no sufficient ground upon which the warrant could be justified. With respect to the second head of his objection, he begged to state, that the warrant was alleged to have been issued upon the view of the Magistrates whose names it contained. Now he would take leave to state

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that several of the Magistrates, whose names were so surreptitiously used, distinctly and positively denied that they had taken any view upon the subject at all, or had given their sanction to the cruel and oppressive act by which the prisoner was deprived of his liberty, and hence, from the falsehood it contained, it was illegal. Upon these two grounds, first, the absence of all evidence, and secondly, the illegality of the warrant, he confidently demanded the discharge of his unfortunate client. As a proof that the statement which he had made, of certain Magistrates having denied all participation in the proceeding which led to Wilson's arrest, he requested to read a letter from Mr. Goodenough, one of the Gentlemen whose names were included in the warrant, directed, "*To —— Dyer, Esq. the humane friend of George Wilson, Blackheath.*"—Mr. Ellis then read the following letter:—

SIR—Although I have not the honour to be known to you, your humanity to a poor unoffending man, gives you a title to the information this letter is intended to convey, in the following narrative of facts:—

"In the Warrant for apprehending Wilson, I with five more Magistrates who did not sign it, are unequivocally stated as not only *approving*, but that it was upon our *view* that the Warrant was granted.—Now, Sir, what follows is the exact truth:—

"On Thursday, the 21st of September, ten Magistrates met at the Mitre to finish the Alehouse Licenses for the year. That done, by the orders of Mr. Williams, the Clerk prepared a Blank Warrant for those gentleman to sign, who were about to depart before Mr. Williams had prepared it. This extraordinary measure was in an instant sent to the 'Tombs of all the *Capulets!*' Gentlemen then began to consider and open their eyes, and, I believe, *six* out of the *ten*, with the chairman, took their departure, one after the other, except that two or three accompanied me, after a most pointed declaration, from most of us, that we would have nothing to do with it—I particularly stating, that the stopping the selling liquors in the booths was as far as, in my judgment, we could go, according to law.

"It now appears, however, that Mr. Williams persevered, and, with three other Magistrates, signed the instrument, upon which a British subject has been deprived of his liberty, without any information upon oath, and, in my poor opinion, without a crime.

"Thus, Sir, have I lost—I hope only, however, until the public are better informed—a reputation which I have been endeavouring

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to establish, for near 40 years; as a Magistrate, by the false statement of my brother magistrates—some of the four, however, I am willing to believe, have been led astray by too confident a belief in the knowledge and ability of Mr. Williams, and his having been so many years an attorney.

"I have been now summoned, by Mr. Williams's single authority, to attend the return of the warrant to-morrow; but I humbly think I cannot do so with propriety, as the warrant, if it be worthy that name, is only returnable before the four gentlemen who signed it; all others have been excluded, for reasons which Mr. Williams probably can explain; but, inasmuch, as such exclusion being unusual, and such a Majority of the Magistrates having disapproved the measure, the Public may not be long at a loss to account for it.

"As this transaction has appeared in the Prints, with my name in it, without my knowledge, or any title whatever to any honour that may be derived from it, I should not do justice, either to your humanity, or my own anxiety to vindicate my conduct, if unjustly aspersed, if I did not allow you to make any use of this letter you thought proper.

"With respect, Sir, have the honour to be,

"Your faithful and humble Servant,

"G. T. GOODENOUGH.

"*Shooter's Hill, Oct. 4, 1815.*

"P. S.—It is rather an addition to the the many singular circumstances that have attended the whole of this business, that Mr. Constable (the Chairman's name) has alone been unmentioned in the warrant, nor is he summoned to attend the return to-morrow.

"—— Dyer, Esq. Blackheath."

Mr. Ellis, in conclusion, said, he would not make any comment upon this letter, it was impossible to add to its strength—it was confirmatory of all he had ventured to offer to their Worships.

Mr. Williams said he should not follow the example of Mr. Goodenough in entering into a personal contention. If he were so inclined, he could, without difficulty, prove that a part of Mr. Goodenough's letter was not consistent with truth; and if he proved that, he apprehended he should be justified in pronouncing the whole equally undeserving of credit. He was not disposed at that period, however, to enter into the subject; at present he should confine himself to calling upon Wilson to produce his sureties.

Mr. Kinnaird now stepped forward. He said, when first he came

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into that room, he had no intention to offer one word upon the proceedings of the Bench, relative to the melancholy transaction which formed the subject of their deliberation, and which had excited such sensations in the public mind. He came there merely for his own information, and with a view of ascertaining whether the idea which he had formed of the duty of a Magistrate hitherto, was incorrect or not. The course which the worthy Chairman seemed determined to pursue, however, induced him reluctantly to step forward in his character of a Magistrate for that county, to request he would furnish him with the grounds, in point of law, upon which he was proceeding? It was stated that a breach of the peace had been committed—he apprehended if such had been the case, there was good and substantial evidence to prove it. Where was that evidence? and without it, could it be intended to hold the prisoner to bail? At best the offence imputed to the prisoner was but an indictable offence, and if so, that was not the place to try it.

Mr. Williams said, he was not acting from himself alone, but merely acted in the name of others, as the Senior Magistrate, and he believed his determination was in conformity with that of his brother Magistrates.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Mason assented.

Mr. Kinnaird had no desire to offer offence to one or any of the Magistrates present, but he would wish some one of them to point out the Statute to which the prisoner, in the conduct he pursued, was amenable? Was it an offence at common law, or, in fact, what was the character of the offence?

Mr. Williams—"Are we to consider you as asking these questions as a Magistrate or as an individual?"

Mr. Kinnaird—As a Magistrate, most certainly, for it has excited the surprise both of myself and of a brother Magistrate, who is here with me, that such a proceeding as that which has taken place should meet the sanction of this Bench."

Mr. Harriet being thus alluded to, stepped forward, and said he confessed the motives by which he had been induced to attend there that day arose in a great measure from curiosity; and he would not have ventured to say a word in a point of such delicacy, if he had not been called forward by his colleague; nor would he even then give an opinion on the very novel proceeding which had taken place, unless called upon so to do by those whom he conceived to be the presiding Magistrates. He had an opinion certainly, and if called upon to state it, he would speak with candour.

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Mr. Kinnaird—"This business has excited and demands the attention of the Magistracy of the kingdom at large."

Mr. Harriet wished to add, that he certainly was desirous of information, and should be glad to learn any thing from the Magistrates there assembled which might throw a light upon his public duty. In his situation as Magistrate of the Thames Police, he had often heard of rowing matches and regattas upon the river Thames; some for wagers, some for remuneration in money, which collected upon the river and on its banks very considerable crowds. He had not hitherto interfered in these, what he conceived to be, laudable exercises—but he might have been wrong in not so doing, and with the view of enlightening his mind, he had come to Greenwich.

Mr. Smith said, he was but a young Magistrate, and would not be vain enough to put his judgment in competition with that of those who had been longer in the commission—but, on the contrary should feel grateful for any information which he might receive through their superior experience.—There were modes, however, of conveying that information, different from that chosen by the two Gentlemen who had that day honoured them with their attendance; and as those modes had not been resorted to, he could not but think those Gentlemen had been actuated by some other motives, not so candid or so well intended as they professed. He was still happy, however, to hear their sentiments. With reference to the subject before them, he begged to state, that he had no personal knowledge whatever of Wilson, and in the steps he had taken was only desirous of putting a stop to that which he conceived to be a very great nuisance.—The scenes which were exhibited on Blackheath were very different from a boat race on the River Thames; and those who witnessed, as he did, the vices which were there exhibited, he was sure would agree with him in deprecating their continuance.—As it was probable his conduct, as well as that of his brother Magistrates, might become a subject of examination elsewhere hereafter, he by no means meant to shrink from the avowal of that which he had done—and he then, in the face of the respectable persons by whom he was surrounded, desired to state, that what he had done was from his own judgment, unbiassed by the opinions of others, and with the best intentions.

Mr. Williams said he should have expected from the characters of the two gentlemen by whom they were addressed, that if in friendship, as brother Magistrates, they had any advice to offer, that they would have conveyed it in a more private and less mortifying manner

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than that which they had chosen. His motives for declining entering into the minutiæ of the business then, was founded upon the understanding which had gone forth, that his conduct would be made the subject of a future inquiry in a Court of Justice. He had been maligned in a variety of ways—his character had been aspersed; and the greatest falsehoods had been detailed of him in the public prints. Those perhaps would be brought against him at a future period, and he wished to reserve his justification till the period arrived. He was aware if he and his brother Magistrates had acted erroneously, that they could come to no harm; they might have been guilty of an error in judgment, but they had acted from the best intentions, and with the sole view of preserving the public peace. As to the tales which were afloat respecting him, he regarded them with the contempt they merited. He despised the paltry threats, some even threatening his life, by which he was hourly assailed.

Mr. Harriet begged to reply to what had fallen from the two Gentlemen who had last spoken, by appealing to a most respectable Magistrate present, whom he had not the honour to know (Mr. Constable) whether he had not declared, on entering the room, that he had come with closed lips, unless called upon to give his opinion, and he was still ready to give that opinion, if desired.

Mr. Smith—"You might have given us your advice privately, and not in the public manner you have chosen."

Mr. Kinnaird—"I only require that one, two, or more of you, Gentlemen, should point out the grounds of the harsh proceeding you are about to take."

Mr. Williams—"The grounds may be discussed by Magistrates in private, but are not to be made the topic of debate thus publicly. Such a discussion, under the circumstances in which we stand, would be premature."

Mr. Constable—"Mr. Kinnaird has asked a plain question, and deserves a gentlemanlike answer."

Mr. Kinnaird—"I again ask, is the offence imputed to the prisoner an offence at Common Law, or against the statute, and what statute?"

Mr. Williams—"I refuse to answer your questions."

Mr. Smith—"I consider it extraordinary, after what has passed, that this business should be pressed further. We have formed our determination, and will abide by it. I do not see why Gentlemen, who so seldom appear at our Bench, should in this particular instance render themselves so conspicuous."

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Mr. Kinnaird—" Mr. Harriet and I do more business for the county of Kent than one-half the Magistrates put together, and I see no indelicacy in our requiring information on this occasion."

Mr. Smith—" If such had been our determination, I should have felt no reluctance in giving you all the information you require. As I before said, I acted in my own view of the case, and considering the scenes on Blackheath highly reprehensible, I agreed to sign the warrant."

Mr. Bicknell, the Clerk, now said he held in his hand two letters from Magistrates who had not attended in pursuance of the summons sent. He wished to know if he might read them?

Mr. Williams—" If Magistrates do not choose to attend, I am at a loss to know upon what ground their opinions are to be received."

Mr. Constable—" Do you object to receiving the official letter of a Magistrate of this Bench?"

Mr. Williams—" Do you know that it is an official letter?"

Mr. Constable—" I do—I was the bearer of it."

The first letter was then read—it was from Mr. Goodenough, and directed to the Bench. It was in substance similar to that sent by him to Mr. J. Dyer—declaring he had no connection with the warrant upon which Wilson was taken into custody, and which he declared to be illegal and unconstitutional.

Mr. Constable now begged to look at the warrant, and, after inspecting it, declared that there had evidently been an alteration in it, subsequent to its being made out, and upon that ground alone, it was illegal. For his own part, he had protested against stopping the unfortunate man. He never could consent to lay the iron hand of the law upon the poor fellow, after he had toiled through 750 miles. It was a cruel and despotic act.

Mr. Williams—" I have no answer to make to such remarks."

Mr. Constable—" You cannot answer it."

Mr. Smith—" We can, but, in my mind, this is not the time for doing so."

The second letter was then read; it was from John Jones, Esq. also one of the Magistrates, whose names were included in the warrant. It acknowledged the receipt of the summons, calling upon Mr. Jones to attend the return of the warrant, and declared that he had left the room before the warrant was even prepared. It also spoke in warm terms of the unhandsome conduct of those who had affixed his name to an instrument which he had never sanctioned, and which in his view was illegal.

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Mr. Williams said, he had it in his power to prove that part of this letter was false.

Mr. Ellis now submitted that he had supported the latter part of his objection, namely, that the warrant on its face contained a direct falsehood, having declared, that a view was taken in the presence of two Gentlemen, who had, by their letters, distinctly disavowed that fact. Its illegality being then substantiated, he again demanded the liberation of his client.

Mr. Williams—"Suppose we can prove that those Gentlemen agreed to the resolutions upon which the warrant was founded?"

Mr. Kinnaird—"That will be no answer to the objection. The allegation is, that those Gentlemen were not on view, as the warrant stated. Nine are stated to have been present, when four only signed."

Mr. Williams—"I decline all further argument on the subject, and again call on Wilson for his bail."

Mr. Kinnaird—"But Mr. Constable has stated, that there has been an alteration on the face of the warrant."

Mr. Williams—"Mr. Constable dare not say so."

Mr. Constable—"Mr. Constable dare repeat any thing which he has once affirmed."

Mr. Williams—"You have said that the warrant was altered after it was signed."

Mr. Constable—"It is false, Sir, I said no such thing. I said it was altered, and it is altered from its original form."

Mr. Williams—"I will commit you if you say one word more. You all know my power in the situation in which I stand (as Chairman.")

Mr. Constable—"You commit me! I defy you to do it! These gentlemen (Mr. Kinnaird and Mr. Harriet) have come here to do you honour by their presence, and what is your return? you throw dirt in their faces!"

Mr. Williams—"Let *them* say so."

Mr. Smith—"It was on our own view we issued the warrant."

Mr. Ellis—"No inhabitant of the Heath has come forward to complain of nuisance or breach of the peace. I am myself an inhabitant of the Heath, and cannot say I was ever disturbed, and I appear here at the entreaty of my neighbours, who were much pleased with the peaceable and good deportment of Wilson."

Mr. Smith—"Placing yourself in a public situation, if you had witnessed what we have witnessed, you would have acted as we have

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done. It is not, however, correct to state, that no inhabitant of Blackheath has come forward. Several have made complaints, and are ready to repeat them, if called on."

Mr. Williams—"I am ready to answer for my conduct either here or elsewhere, and to vindicate my character from aspersion."

Mr. Constable—"And so am I, at any time, under any circumstances, and in a *saw pit* if you choose."

Mr. Harriet—"I am sorry for the heat which has arisen; and, as I am in no respect desirous of participating in the warmth of feeling which has been excited, I shall retire into my private capacity, and no longer offend the *delicacy* of the Gentlemen by whom I have been addressed. I still declare, however, that I am ready to give my opinion, if called upon." Mr. Harriet then retired.

Mr. Kinnaird—"I must now declare, that I appear in my character as a Magistrate, and I beg to state, if there has been an alteration in the warrant, it is illegal."

Mr. Constable now took up the warrant and pointed out the erasure of the word "*several*." Upon this word hinged the consent of *all* or only *a part* of the Magistrates who were stated to have sanctioned the instrument, and whose names were included in the preamble. With the word *several* inserted, it appeared that "*on the view of several of the Magistrates in Petty Sessions assembled*, the said Wilson was," &c. but that word being omitted, it appeared that it was upon the view of *the whole of the Magistrates* so assembled, that the apprehension of the man was ordered. What Mr. Constable complained of was, that this word *several* had formed part of the original warrant, but had been erased without the knowledge even of those who had signed the instrument. He now asked Mr. Bicknell, who had drawn the warrant from the rough draft first prepared, if he had erased the word *several?*

Mr. Bicknell answered—"Certainly not."

Mr. Constable—"Then we understand by whom it was done." (looking at Mr. Williams).

Mr. Williams—"You said, I had altered it after the signatures were put to it."

Mr. Constable—"I never held out any such thing. A warrant to be legal ought to contain only *truth*. Here is a *palpable falsehood*, of which the Magistrates who signed this warrant ought to be ashamed. It asserted that the grievance was viewed by all, when it was viewed by none."

Mr. Kinnaird—"This is certainly fatal to the warrant. It is too

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bad. It is disgraceful thus to rob a fellow-creature of his liberty, without information upon oath. I am only surprised Gentlemen could have lent themselves to such a transaction."

Mr. Constable—"Oh! Mr. Williams pretends to more knowledge than falls to the lot of fifteen such men! He is the greatest egotist that ever walked the earth!"

Mr. Smith—"If I could have supposed that the warrant was vitiated by any alteration, I certainly should not have signed it; and if that is the case, I must decline persisting in pressing it further. I however, repeat, I still do not think I have acted improperly."

Mr. Kinnaird—"The erasure of any word in a warrant renders it *corrupt*. In any civil proceedings, if a forgery is discovered, the whole must be quashed—so with a warrant."

Mr. Williams—"You don't mean to say there has been any forgery practised here?"

Mr. Kinnaird—"You could not have understood me, or you would not place that construction on my words. What I mean to say is, that if the averments of an instrument are not true, it must fall to the ground. The averment here, 'that the warrant was issued on the view of all the Magistrates, whose names are mentioned,' is false, and consequently, by parity of reasoning, the warrant is illegal."

Mr. Ellis—"The averments have failed completely."

[Here Mr. Williams was observed to smile incredulously.]

Mr. Kinnaird—"I did not expect Mr. Williams would have laughed at that which, if he had but considered, he must have admitted."

Mr. Williams—"I did not laugh."

Mr. Constable—"Oh! no, it is only a *sneer!* If there is any thing *funny* about Williams, it is a *smile of repentance.*"

Mr. Williams—"Those who hear you, know how to appreciate what you say."

Mr. Constable—"Those who hear me *do* know how to appreciate what I say—and so much the worse for you."

Mr. Kinnaird—"I am only surprised how any man could put his name to such an instrument."

Mr. Williams—"Suppose all the Magistrates who signed the warrant joined in the resolution upon which it was founded?"

Mr. Smith—"As the warrant is false, we must stop all further proceedings. I beg to declare, however, that I had no personal

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enmity to Wilson, and would have done him no intentional injury."

Mr. Constable—"I am very certain you would not."

Mr. Smith—"I have acted on this occasion as upon all others—with perfect independence."

Mr. Ellis—"It is quite clear that Wilson was walking in the most harmless manner; he never committed any breach of the peace—and, having walked 750 miles, the booths, which were the real nuisance, being removed, I think he might have been permitted to finish his undertaking."

Mr. Mason—"I must say the averment, on the face of the warrant, is not correct. I did not see the alteration when I signed the warrant; I only saw the original draft, and did not read the copy when I signed it."

Mr. Williams—"The alteration was made in the warrant to make it correspond with the original resolution of the Bench, at which all the gentlemen whose names are mentioned were present."

Mr. Smith—"I did not see the erasure alluded to when I signed the warrant, or I would not have put my name to it, as I could not but admit its incorrectness. My sole object in what I did was to abate what I conceived to be a great nuisance."

Mr. Constable—"Come, let us have no trifling, but saddle the right horse. Mr. Bicknell, I ask you, did you make the alteration in the warrant?"

Mr. Bicknell—"*I did not.*"

Mr. Williams—"There is no act which I have done that I am ashamed to avow. When the warrant was brought to me to be signed, I perceived it was not in conformity with the original resolution, and I therefore erased the word several to make it agree."

He here referred to the resolutions, and begged the Rev. Dr. Clarke, who was present, to read the warrant, while he read the resolution.

Dr. Clarke politely declined the office.

Mr. Smith—"Mr. Goodenough was present when the resolutions of the Bench were passed, but declined having any thing to do with the warrant."

Mr. Constable, addressing himself to Mr. Bicknell—"By whom were you ordered to prepare the warrant?"

Mr. Williams—"By me."

Mr. Ellis—"I apprehend my client is at liberty?"

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Mr. Williams—"I have the opinion of an able lawyer, that the warrant is good in form and substance, but as I cannot withstand the judgment of my colleagues, I must succumb."

Wilson was then declared free!

A Gentleman connected with the newspapers now stepped forward, in answer to the charge brought by Mr. Williams in the early part of the proceedings against newspapers in general, for having published falsehoods, begged to state, that all the statements he had seen were founded in fact.

Mr. Williams was ready, he said, to state what he alluded to.

The Gentleman in question desired to say, if Mr. Williams alluded to the different answers given by his servants at Lea, the one declared him at home, and the other abroad, the statement in the public prints was most correct, as such had actually been the case, and he was ready to give evidence to the circumstance from his own observation. If from the publication of this singular discordance of story any inference unpleasant to the feelings of Mr. Williams had been drawn, it did not therefore follow that the newspapers merited the accusation of falsehood.

Mr. Williams wished to explain, but the subject being considered disposed of, he was overruled.

Mr. Constable said, he believed Mr. Williams was not at home on the day in question.

Throughout the whole of this unprecedented proceeding, the room was crowded to excess, and, as may be supposed, in so mixed an assembly, there was a strong expression of feeling where the discussion was calculated to excite it. Mr. Constable especially received unbounded applause, as did Mr. Kinnaird and Mr. Ellis, whose firm and manly conduct deserves every praise.

Poor Wilson was perfectly passive, and at the conclusion of the business was drawn home to Mr. Dyer's house, on Blackheath, decorated with blue ribbons, and hailed by the applause of some hundreds of spectators.

Thus, then, has terminated an adventure, in which so many respectable characters and a generous public have been pleased to take so warm an interest in my behalf. On the question relative to me, which awaited the decision of the Bench

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of Magistrates at Greenwich, that decision, and the discussion on which it was founded, are now before the public, who will form their own conclusions. I have the heartfelt satisfaction to stand vindicated, I trust, from the character of a violator of the public peace of the County of Kent, or an exciter of *tumult* and *disorder;* and I am doubly happy in the opportunity of drawing in my own mind a marked discrimination between certain of the Members of that Worshipful Bench, on a procedure which I, and I believe the public, had been taught to attribute to the *unanimous will* of *all* the Magistrates named in the body of the warrant. Had it not been for the manly and disinterested support of Mr. DYER, Mr. ELLIS, and Mr. OHMANN, the candour, impartiality, and good old British feeling evinced by Mr. CONSTABLE and Mr. GOODENOUGH, in utterly disclaiming and reprobating a transaction for which the sanction of their names had been surreptitiously borrowed without their knowledge—and the spontaneous interposition of Mr. KINNAIRD and Mr. HARRIETT, so honourable to their characters as British Magistrates, in vindication of the laws and the liberty of the subject, I should, without farther proof or investigation, or being called on for my defence, have been consigned, under a *mittimus*, to the County Gaol, to abide an indictment at the Quarter Sessions—if I had not liberal and commiserating friends, though a stranger and an alien in the county, ready to offer their sureties for my appearance, to support me on the trial, and to prevent the Liberties of a British Subject from being

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wounded by an *experiment* on so obscure an individual as myself.

The credit of this experiment, however, now rests exclusively with *Mr. Justice Williams*, *Mr. Smith*, *Mr. Mason*, and the *Reverend Dr. Burney*; for *Mr. Good-enough* has completely vindicated, by his letter, the six other Magistrates, whose names were *borrowed*, from all concern with the transaction. The warrant itself now stands branded with *falsehood* and acknowledged *erasure*. Mr. MASON, one of the *four* who signed it, admitted the averment was *not correct*, and that he did not perceive the erasure when he signed it. Mr. SMITH has said the same, and acknowledged his own inexperience as a young Magistrate. The Rev. Dr. BURNEY, it should seem, has abandoned it altogether, for he did not attend the return, to defend his own conduct; so that at length "the *panniers* are fixed on the right—*horse*."

Before I close this narrative I must notice the conduct of two persons, named *Mase* and *Stephenson*; who appeared extremely busy about me, from the commencement of my walks, to the last. The one I had employed at a stipulated price, to assist me during the time; the other, unasked, and much against my inclination, forced his services upon me; and from their conduct, the *sincerity* of their *friendship* and the *objects* of their interference will appear.

Under the pretence of guarding me from annoyance at the *Hare and Billet*, these gentlemen took post at the door of the room to which I usually retired, and with offensive rudeness, prohibited many gentlemen from seeing me; and many liberal donations intended for me, were intercepted in their way and never

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reached me. Even on the second night, my generous friend *Mr. Dyer*, was positively refused admittance, unless he would first give *Mr. Mase*, a *pound note!*— which, however, he judiciously refused to give into any hands but my own; and they suffered none to approach but their own acquaintance, or such as complied with their extortionary demands. For the first six days they constantly ate and drank to excess, and treated their companions, at my expence; and as I was informed, shewed themselves quite flush of money at the tippling booths in the course of each successive day. I endeavoured to check these proceedings; but their ultimate designs were still more glaring towards the conclusion of the business. On the night of *Friday*, the *twelfth* from my commencement, *Mr. Mase* who was very officious in assisting to change my *shoes* and *socks*, took an opportunity to throw himself on *one* knee, violently, and with his whole weight, on my naked foot, obviously with a purpose to lame me. The pain I felt from this violence was so excessive that I very nearly fainted, and fell from my chair. By way of relieving me, he threw a tumbler of water in my face, while he and his companions laughed at my embarrassment, and made quite light of the circumstance; and in a short time after, some hours before my days' task was completed, he put me on a pair of fresh socks, which gave me so much pain in the hours' walk, that on finishing the round, I called for the chair, on which I usually rested at the starting post, to change them. But no chair was to be had, and *Mr. Mase* earnestly urged me to continue the next round without changing. I broke through the crowd, and went to the *Hare and Billet*, when, in pulling off the socks, I found they

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contained several sharp *small-pebbles* about the size of peas. I put on other socks which *Mr. Mase* gave me, but on changing them also at the next round, I found them well lined with gravel. Another pair were then handed me — and on turning them inside out, more pebbles fell from them. To guard against a trick so palpable, I used no socks afterwards, without first examining them myself.

Having eluded this trick, another *more base* and *dangerous*, to which I have already alluded, was attempted, towards the conclusion of my task on the ensuing Sunday. Preparatory to that days' task, which was performed in front of Lord Gwydir's park, plenty of wine and other refreshments were conveyed to the place, through the kindness of my friends, *Mr. Dyer*, *Mr. Whittle*, and *Mr. Beksley*, and were placed in the lodge, where the gate-keeper had the kindness to dress a fowl for my dinner; but, while I was on the foot, these two *worthy* attendants, divided the wine amongst themselves and their acquaintance, and got quite drunk; and when I had finished my task, about half-past five next morning, after many interruptions and insults from those persons, and a party of their accomplices from Woolwich, I stepped into the lodge for some refreshment; but all was consumed. *Mr. Stephenson* and *Mr. Mase* expressed much seeming concern; and as I was so much exhausted, one of them pressed me to take some *gin* and *water*, which the other handed to him. Weary and faint, I drank about the quantity of a gill; but I soon perceived that this was a *drench* designedly compounded to put an end to my *exertions*, if not to *my life*: it instantly turned me sick, and much alarmed me. They pressed me much to stay and

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sleep there for some hours; but I positively refused, and entered the chaise to return to *Mr. Dyer's*, and though the distance was but six miles, these men and their associates contrived to retard my progress for two whole hours, so that I did not get back till near eight o'clock; and had it not been for the kindness of *Dr. Lucas*, in giving me some antidote to carry off the dose I had been induced to swallow, I should have been utterly unable to resume my task on Monday, and so must have failed, from *that* cause, if *no worse* consequences had followed. The parties in this infamous conspiracy are well known at Woolwich, where, I trust, the fame of their deeds will follow them.

It remains for me now only to repeat once more my most humble and earnest thanks to my generous and disinterested friend, *Mr. Dyer*, and his worthy family, for their unequalled kindness and protection; to *Dr. Lucas*, for his humane attention; to *Mr. Ellis*, for his manly and liberal support in the hour of trial, and to *Mr. Ohmann*, *Mr. Whittle*, *Mr. Beksley*, and many other gentlemen, for the generous solicitude evinced on my behalf. To *Mr. Constable*, *Mr. Harriet*, and *Mr. Goodenough*, and the other Magistrates, for their interference, not only in my behalf, but in vindication of the laws they so worthily administer.

My humble gratitude is also due to numerous other Ladies and Gentlemen in the neighbourhood of Blackheath; and particularly to Lord Percival and Lord Folkestone, for their condescending notice and liberal donations. To the gentlemen of the Stock Exchange, for their munificent subscriptions; to the Managers, not only of the *Circus*, where I obtained the first engagement, but of *Covent Garden*, and other Theatres,

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for their generous promptitude to distinguish me in the public notice; and, in a word, to all those generous friends who have honoured me by their liberal support, and who, I hope, will forgive the omission of a more specific nomination.

I remain

Their ever grateful

And devoted Servant,

GEO. WILSON.

Hare and Billet, Blackheath,
Oct. 10, 1815.

The following is the Report of Dr. Lucas's *Observations respecting Wilson and his Performance.*

George Wilson, aged Fifty, Five Feet Four Inches and a Half in height, and in weight 8st. 9½lb. square built, his legs bowed, which, with his arms and feet, are small in proportion to the size of his body. His mode of living has been very abstemious, and diet plain, to which he attributes the power he at present possesses. His pulse has usually been between 60 and 70, with a proper degree of fulness and elasticity. In consequence of receiving an injury, some time since, in his leg, he walked rather lame, with a quick short step, generally at the rate of about three miles and a half an hour, and when in exercise seldom perspired. The first day of walking, by wearing a pair of new shoes that were too small, and the weather being intensely hot, one of his feet became blistered, which was soon restored by proper applications, and from that time until his arrest, caused him no further inconvenience. The extreme heat of the weather, on the 21st of September, (being his eleventh day) occasioned him to experience considerable uneasiness from a determination of blood to the head, which was effectually relieved by a nasal hæmorrhage. During

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the time of his herculean task, his diet was principally composed of fowls, jellies, strong broths, tea, milk, eggs, &c. a moderate quantity of Madeira wine, about four or five glasses in the twenty-four hours; his appetite was good, and had increased; he slept well, and his spirits remaining undiminished, I do not doubt but that he would have accomplished his arduous task, had he been permitted.

WM. LUCAS.

Blackheath.

DIURNAL OF HIS PROGRESS.

Wilson's weight at starting was 8st. 9½lb. On Monday, Sept. 11, he commenced his arduous undertaking; and the following is the progress of each day:—

DAY.					
		FIRST WEEK.			
1st,	Monday,	began at six o'clock in the morning, and completed the 50 miles at			5 min. past 10.
2d,	Tuesday,	began at	5,	finished at	half-past 10.
3d,	Wednesday,	.....	5,	.....	40 min. past 10.
4th,	Thursday,	..... ¼ past	5,	.....	11.
5th,	Friday,	..... ¾ past	5,	.....	20 min. past 11.
6th,	Saturday,	.....	4,	.....	half-past 11.
7th,	Sunday,	.....	7,	.....	quarter past 11.
		SECOND WEEK.			
8th,	Monday,	began at	8,	finished at	half-past 2.
9th,	Tuesday,	.....	8,	.....	2.
10th,	Wednesday,	..... ¼ past	8,	.....	40 min. past 2.
11th,	Thursday,	..... about	9,	.....	40 min. past 2.
12th,	Friday,	.....	9,	.....	10 min. past 2.
13th,	Saturday,	.....	9,	.....	half-past 2.
14th,	Sunday,	.....	9,	.....	¼ past 5 Mon. morn.
15th,	Monday,	..... ¼ before	12,	.....	20 min. before 6, on Tuesday morn.

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MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM

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